THE

# AMERICAN WEST

COVER: Reflected sunlight illuminates simple reminders of past agricultural prosperity in California's Mission San Antonio de Padua, third-oldest in the chain of twenty-one West Coast missions. Although almost entirely a 1948–49 restoration of the mission as it appeared in 1810, the present structure has already begun to assume the patina of mellow beauty that time gives to faded objects.

*(Photograph by Marvin Wax,* from Mystique of the Missions, *to be released on August 30 by the American West Publishing Company.)*

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*The essence of pioneer sacrifice and fortitude has perhaps never been better expressed than in "Madonna of the Prairie" by W. H. D. Koerner. For additional paintings relating to the pioneer scene see pages 30–41.*

RUTH KOERNER OLIVER

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THE
# AMERICAN WEST
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# The Flappers Were Her Daughters

## *The Liberated, Literary World of Gertrude Atherton*

by Elinor Richey

LONDON IN THE EIGHTEEN-NINETIES was gay, gregarious, and agog over the arts. Literary figures shone with especial brilliance amidst the pomp and plush of fashionable drawing rooms that vibrated to the rafters with avante-garde ideas and challenged taboos. Moving with cool assurance through these scintillating gaslit throngs was a handsome California widow. Blonde, svelte, with big level-gazing eyes, she provocatively combined an aristocratic air with spade-calling talk.

She was Gertrude Atherton, whose novels were being published rapid-fire by a London house to appreciative reviews and brisk sales. Although followed by a trail of dazzled suitors, she showed no inclination to cash in her laurels for a titled husband—and was always frustrating her admirers by slipping away to the countryside to dash off another book.

Despite a prolonged sojourn in England, Gertrude Atherton had no intentions of forsaking her native heath. But she was picking a bone with it. Her own country had spurned her talent in no uncertain terms. Her London success had come as a pretty surprise, but she considered it her rightful due, and it was now her burning purpose to blazon her name so vividly upon the English literary firmament that Americans would be forced to accept her.

Her bone-picking was especially directed at New York and at her hometown of San Francisco. New York had called her writings raw, cheap, obscene, and stupidly immoral, while branding her heroines farfetched, freakish, and the "day-dreams of a shop girl." And her hometown and the haughty California family she had married into would scarcely have ostracized her more had she executed a belly dance at the winter cotillion.

And for what? For doing the same thing that had brought London to her feet. For writing novels about independent young women who flouted Victorian mores, pursued the men they wanted, enjoyed sex in and out of marriage, and held give-and-take discourses with their brain-mates. These flinty heroines moved in an action-packed locus awash with lechery, suicide, alcoholism, adultery, and an infinite variety of sudden catastrophies.

Of course, the reason the English so readily accepted all these defiant females and their gritty American backgrounds was precisely because they *were* American; such conduct and standards seemed to them entirely appropriate for parvenues. If there was anything the English could not tolerate in those days of waxing American power, it was Americans who presumed to act like English gentry. Mrs. Atherton, as perceptive as any of her levelheaded heroines, was somewhat suspicious of her London vogue, but she wasn't above using it to make her countrymen eat their words.

But she had been genuinely puzzled by the American response to her writing. Farfetched? Unreal? Gertrude Atherton could not believe her heroines farfetched and unrealistic because she, like many writers, created her heroines from the psychological ingredients of her own character. They were all, at least partially, herself in various disguises. Likewise, the trials she maneuvered them through were equivalent in degree, if not in specifics, to those she herself had weathered. Being highly self-centered, she had assumed her experience to be the way life was and accordingly had written about what seemed to her everyday character traits and events. Actually, both real life and its translation were highly atypical—Gertrude Atherton's California childhood and young womanhood had been an unending series of catastrophies and crises, occurring almost with the regularity of horror tableaux in an amusement park tunnel-of-love. In adjusting to these jolting life-quakes she had developed remarkable resilience and tough-

ness, and her blue eyes had acquired their cool, unwavering gaze.

Gertrude Atherton was born in 1857, and her birthplace, symbolically, was on San Francisco's Rincon Hill, which later would be leveled to accommodate a factory district. Change, swift and sweeping, was to be her life pattern. The marriage from which she issued was at her birth already teetering. Her mother, Gertrude Franklin, a pampered, southern-bred San Francisco belle, had been pressed over tearful protestation into marrying Thomas Horn, a prospering Connecticut-born tobacco merchant, whom she considered a pushy Yankee. With marriage, scorn ripened into hatred. "They quarrelled incessantly," Gertrude Atherton wrote in her autobiography *Adventures of a Novelist:* "He took to drink, and as my mother was in hysterics most of the time while I was on the way, it is a wonder I was not born an idiot." The stormy couple fastened their affections on their daughter, a blue-eyed, golden-haired child who looked deceptively angelic. They quickly spoiled her into a tiny package of willfulness; she always got her way, even to prancing on the table during a dinner party and kicking over the teacups. The Horns' domestic scandal climaxed when young Mrs. Horn became the first woman in San Francisco society to file for divorce.

Care of Gertrude was assumed by her equally doting maternal grandparents, while her mother returned to being a belle, although a sullied one. The new arrangement did nothing to diminish the child's egocentricity, but it did give it a new direction. Her grandfather, Stephen Franklin (a great-grandnephew of Benjamin Franklin), was a highly cultivated man. He had come to San Francisco in the 1850s hoping to recoup the fortune he had lost in New Orleans. He never succeeded, but he did become a formative influence in the new city as a newspaper editor and later as a minor official of the Bank of California; and he acquired one of the finest private libraries in the city. Instead of playing horse with his spirited granddaughter, he read aloud to her, implanting an early interest in books. But the grandmother's efforts to cultivate domestic virtues in the child were a total failure. Even when tied to a chair for her sewing lesson, little Gertrude resolutely refused to make stitches. She was forever running away, returning with wild imaginary tales. If unable to find a listener, she would stand before a mirror and tell them to herself. It was feared she was a born liar.

In time her mother settled on a new husband, a stockbroker named Uhlhorn who claimed her adoration as completely as Mr. Horn had claimed her aversion. Gertrude and her mother settled in a fine town house and spent their days buying new dresses and bonnets. But this time Gertrude despised the man of the house, and before long the feeling was mutual. After she deliberately hurtled down the bannisters toward him, almost knocking him down, her mother placed her in a local boarding school. Things did not go smoothly, however, and Gertrude was withdrawn. Settled in another school, she was expelled the second day for disturbing class.

But soon there was no more money for boarding schools, and the fine house had to be vacated. Mr. Uhlhorn had failed in business. Next, seeking a new stake, he gambled away his wife's jewels. By this time there were two little Uhlhorns, Gertrude's half-sisters Aleece and Daisy. Of that period, Gertrude remembered "moving into small and smaller lodgings in unfashionable streets, eating at restaurants, Mr. Uhlhorn glowering, my mother often weeping, the children squalling."

Then Mr. Uhlhorn's fortunes brightened somewhat, and the family moved into a fashionable boardinghouse, and after that into a modest dwelling. But now there were recurrent quarrels because of Mrs. Uhlhorn's jealousy of her husband's suspiciously late hours. Gertrude later wrote: "I grew up with the idea that the marital condition was a succession of bickerings." But worse was to come. One night her stepfather terrified her mother by trying to commit suicide with chloroform. He was revived, but only to be rushed by her grandfather aboard a ship bound for South America. Mr. Uhlhorn had forged the name of his employer for a large sum, and his victim had agreed not to prosecute on condition that he depart the country. But there was no keeping the scandal out of the newspapers. Gertrude's mother fell into a prolonged semicoma, such was her grief for the feckless man she still loved and would never see again.

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***California novelist Gertrude Atherton in about 1917: still youthful and svelte, already an "indestructible comet."***

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*Gertrude in the 1890s, when she found herself both the toast of European salons and a "lurid sensationalist" at home.*

BY AGE FOURTEEN, Gertrude had already announced she was "going to be an authoress." The notion was planted by a schoolteacher who singled out her highly-wrought compositions to read before the class. Stephen Franklin, again breadwinner for his daughter's brood, was delighted at Gertrude's ambition and took a firm step to mould it. He insisted, to her distress, that she nightly read to him for two hours from the learned books in his library. Frowning and mumbling resentfully, she turned the pages of such tomes as Hume's *History of England* and Thier's *History of the French Revolution.* Later, she acknowledged that "I was educated against my will into a taste for serious reading, and I have never ceased to be grateful." But her compositions more often drew her grandfather's criticism than his praise, and when she proudly showed him a poem she had essayed, he tersely advised, "Confine yourself hereafter to prose."

Her grandfather sacrificed to send her to a succession of schools for young ladies, where she exasperated the headmistresses by ignoring rules, refusing to exercise, and voraciously reading adult novels. At length, in her seventeenth year, he sent her to Lexington, Kentucky, to attend Sayre Institute under the watchful eye of a highly religious aunt who lived nearby.

Kentucky bestirred the romantic in Gertrude, and she discovered beaux. They swiftly drove out of her head all authoress ambitions. Under the nose of her shocked but helpless aunt, she flirted, she danced, she sipped mint julep and proclaimed herself an agnostic. When she got herself engaged to two young men at once, her aunt wrote west that she was sending Gertrude home. Kissing her niece good-bye at the train, she told her sadly: "You have your points, Gertrude, and I can't help but liking you, but I am free to say that I was never so glad to see the last of anyone in my life. I think you are headed straight for the devil, but I shall pray for you."

Which dismayed Gertrude not at all. She was anxious to test her coquetry in the ballrooms of San Francisco. Giddy with expectation, she had visions of her grandfather's bank associates joining to "bring her out." Perhaps her grandfather's longtime friend and wealthy bank president, William C. Ralston, would honor her with a ball at his famous Belmont estate.

She was asleep in her Pullman berth somewhere in the High Sierra when a newsboy burst into the train shouting, "Failure of the Bank of California and suicide of William C. Ralston!" She returned to an atmosphere of gloom and straitened circumstances. Home was now the modest family ranch in the country forty miles south of San Francisco.

Just when her life had promised infinite possibilities, all hope seemed gone. Stuck in the country! Even her mother, still beautiful at thirty-eight, was down to one suitor, and an unlikely one at that. He was George Atherton, the slight, handsome, twenty-four-year-old son of the master of the neighboring estate, the proud Faxon Dean Atherton. The staunchly Catholic, fiercely moral Athertons considered themselves the most exclusive family in California, and they were violently opposed to their son's infatuation with a Protestant divorcee fourteen years his senior.

Gertrude learned, to her amazement, that George nonetheless was determined to marry her mother and she him—that is, as soon as he could find a job, which he seemed in no hurry to do. Gertrude sniffed her disapproval, but her mother urged her to "treat George decently." So she haughtily tolerated his presence, while fretting at the time on her hands, wondering what was going on in the city and where she would ever find a beau. The ranch offered no diversion whatever—or almost none. There *was* George. And several months after her return to California, she and George rode into nearby San Jose one morning to meet her grandfather's train, and on the way got themselves secretly married by a Catholic priest.

Years later, Gertrude Atherton laughed off that rash, loveless (on her part) marriage as "one of the most important incidents of my school life." Yet, quite probably, her marriage more than any other event of her life made her a novelist. What enclosed and stifled her during the next several years generated such a fury of frustration that she seized upon her childhood pastime as a frantic act of self-preservation.

At eighteen, the wild, high-soaring starling found herself in a coop with her wings clipped. Discovering the marriage, her grandfather had erupted with a terrifying rage, while her

mother had collapsed into one of her semicomas. This time, Gertrude's usual mend-all smiles and dimples were futile. As for the Athertons, they stoically accepted her as an irreversible fact and the lesser of two evils but relegated her to the very bottom of the vast family hierarchy.

Her two-hundred-pound Spanish mother-in-law, who larded tyranny with kindness, undertook at once to have Gertrude converted to Catholicism and to tone down her spirits. The slightest flicker of mental activity on the girl's part drew a subtle reminder that intellect was out of place among the female sex. Her whole duty, she was made to understand, was to be a helpmeet to George. But Gertrude's lord and master scarcely inspired such singular dedication. He idled away his days and spent all of the allowance his family meted out on himself. Gertrude, who even in lean times had enjoyed an allowance from her grandfather, now found herself a penniless heiress. Cut off from her own family, she whiled away the passing days on the veranda thinking daggers, when not patting yawns.

After Gertrude showed promise of becoming a proper Atherton by producing a baby boy and naming him after George, Atherton senior set George up in the brokerage business in San Francisco. He also built the couple a house in a dense wood on a corner of the estate. Gertrude won over her mother-in-law by letting her assume direction of little George's upbringing. This was no sacrifice for Gertrude, for children bored her; she confessed to preferring puppies to babies.

George commuted daily to the city with an important-looking portfolio, but his enterprise was short-lived. He then launched another business, but it was even shorter duration. Next the family assigned him the task of reclaiming their forty-five-thousand-acre ranch at Milpitas from the squatters who had overrun it. George's management quickly proved inept, and the family shifted him to another holding, which he soon bungled as well. He then worked for a time as a stagecoach driver, but got fired after overturning a load of passengers.

By this time the senior Atherton had died, leaving his estate indivisible until the youngest child had reached majority. But George persuaded his mother to advance him his share of the inheritance for the purpose of financing an ambitious vineyard near Oroville. Gertrude unhappily found herself tied down with two infants—a daughter named Muriel having arrived by this time—in a dilapidated house in a desolate rural spot. She wearily endured extremes of heat and cold, bad water, bedbugs, and runaway servants until that undertaking too went under and they were back at their house in the woods subsisting on a strict family allowance.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, Gertrude Atherton took serious stock of her life. For five years she had lived by George's decrees, and where had it gotten her? She was as trapped as ever. Indeed, the trap was now even more grueling. George, his

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

***Gertrude's loveless marriage to George Atherton, above, ended with his unexpected demise on an ocean voyage.***

possibilities exhausted, hung around the house, mopish and irritable. Always hotly jealous, he was even more so now that Gertrude's figure had filled out seductively. He accused her of harboring secret thoughts, and well he might. She was thinking hard of how she might gain her independence and was wondering if it might be through writing for pay. But she well knew that the Athertons, indeed all of San Francisco society, had the utmost contempt for women who "exhibited themselves in print." She would have to write anonymously.

Telling George she was scribbling for her own amusement, she began writing with furious concentration. First, she wrote brief articles and essays, which found acceptance in a new San Francisco weekly, the *Argonaut;* her earliest publications were without pay, but soon they were earning her five to ten dollars each. After this warm-up, she scouted for an idea for a novel and discovered it in a newspaper item George had lingered over at the breakfast table.

It concerned the auctioning off of a trunk full of wedding finery and souvenirs of a once-beautiful San Francisco socialite named Nellie Gordon, who had died several years before. Gertrude remembered her mother and her friends gossiping in hushed tones about the Gordon family scandal, and she had heard more from the Athertons, whose estate adjoined the Gordon's summer place. Nellie's mother had been an alcoholic, and jealous of her husband's love for their only

child, she planted in her daughter her own vice; the girl struggled against it, but after a tragic love affair, she yielded and let her life go to the ruin her mother had prepared.

Altering only the names, Gertrude wrote the story as truthfully as knowledge permitted, filling in the gaps with her lively imagination. She let out all the stops in the passionate love scenes. For fillip she wove into the background almost every socially prominent San Franciscan, including the Athertons and the impeccable Mrs. Hall McAllister, sister of New York social arbiter Ward McAllister.

The *Argonaut* bought it at once for $150 and ran it under a pseudonym with the lilting title of *The Randolphs of Redwoods*. It ran for six installments, from the first raising a furor such as San Francisco had never experienced over the printed word. How very wicked, all agreed, to revive a scandal decent people wanted to forget. Everybody who had ever written for publication was accused of perpetrating the abomination—except the author herself. The large cast of supporting characters trembled from week to week to see what astonishing things they would be made to say and do next. George guessed the truth and was in terror lest his wife's authorship leak out.

THE BETTMANN ARCHIVE

***Finally accepted by critics in America as well as abroad, Gertrude Atherton moved into her mature years with cool assurance, relishing frequent romances but prizing "liberty and freedom too much to sacrifice either to any man."***

Of course it soon did, and the Athertons turned on their erring daughter in unison and accused her of callously betraying and disgracing them. Ladies in Spain did not write, Mrs. Atherton intoned. Gertrude was made to understand that there was something gravely wrong with a young mother who would write such things. As punishment the Athertons banished her from San Francisco society for an entire season. When she reentered it, half of San Francisco wouldn't speak to her; some never did again.

Naturally, she began another novel, and George's blackest rages, his most vehement pounding on the locked door of her writing room did not stay her pen. This time she undertook a historical novel, piling up a three-hundred-thousand word pastiche of history in which figured Napoleon III, Garibaldi, and King Vittorio Emanuele. The heroine was a brilliant American woman who, widowed at an early age, went abroad and influenced the course of European politics. The eastern publisher to whom she submitted it returned it at once. At first she was surprised and angry, but upon rereading her manuscript she saw it lacked conviction. She decided to hide it in the attic and rewrite it when she had become better versed in continental intrigue. But while she was fortifying herself to revamp her brainchild, the rats ate it.

She let the rats have the last word and attacked a new subject that had piqued her interest: reincarnation. She couldn't resist another foreign setting. The story moved from Wales to Paris and concerned a pair of lovers named Harold and Weir, who discovered themselves to be the reincarnation of their grandparents, who had been illicit lovers. This knowledge, for highly intricate reasons, led to renunciation and suicide. She titled it with a line from Hamlet's soliloquy, *What Dreams May Come.*

Publisher after publisher rejected it. Gertrude's spirits sank lower and lower, and she told intimates she was convinced her narrow existence would stifle her career. Enveloped by woods, how was she ever to "see life?" Around this time little George died of diphtheria. Suddenly, Gertrude had had all she could endure of the Atherton estate. Later she would recall: "I hated it as I have never hated any place since. I hated everyone in it—George most of all." She issued an ultimatum: if George did not move her into town, she would leave him. Seeing she meant precisely that, he took a modest flat in San Francisco, where she lost no time forming a small salon to discuss writing and books. While keeping her novel on its round of publishers, she wrote short pieces for the newspapers and the *Overland Monthly*. But she longed to travel, and every time she saw a friend off on a train she grew sick with envy.

Instead, it was for George that travel opportunity suddenly opened. The family was visited by Mrs. Atherton's nephew, an officer in the Chilean navy, whose ship called at San Francisco while on a training cruise. George, still at loose ends, decided to join the cruise and return to Chile to butter up a godfather who might remember him in his will. He had been gone two months when, without warning, his body was returned

to San Francisco in a most startling way—embalmed in a barrel of rum! All was a fearful mystery until a delayed letter shed explanation on what it called "the remnants." George had died aboard ship from a dose of morphine taken to relieve a kidney stone. In that day ship captains catered to sailor superstition against shipping with a corpse, so the navy officers had disguised it by doubling it into a cask of rum and shipping it home under a cargo of coconuts. The letter stated that since the rum had come out of the navymen's rations, "causing them to grumble," it would be well if the widow would "make it up to them."

Had she written such a sequence into one of her novels, the critics would have thought "farfetched" too mild a word. "Lurid and farcical!" they'd have cried. But those were the circumstances that provided the turning point to Gertrude Atherton's life by severing her hated marriage bond—the bond that had begun scarcely less remarkably a decade before.

Gertrude's remaining ties to San Francisco were swiftly cut. Coolly maneuvering an escape, she sweetly called on Mrs. Atherton and assured her that while ladies did not write in Spain, they did elsewhere, and received handsome remuneration. She would be able to support herself by writing if only she could situate herself in New York where opportunity waited. A modest monthly allowance would make it possible.

Mrs. Atherton shuddered at the thought of a woman of her family alone in such a place. But harboring a scheme of her own, she was receptive to bargaining: she agreed to provide an allowance if Gertrude would give her little Muriel, who so resembled George, and for whom she would provide in her will as for her own children. Gertrude, who had no intention of taking Muriel anyhow, tried not to accept too eagerly.

Next, she appealed to her grandfather, arguing that the talent he had nurtured in her would be wasted in San Francisco. A little sadly, he borrowed a thousand dollars from the local theological seminary and gave it to her, urging her to keep her writing on a "high moral tone." The members of her literary salon gathered on the train platform to see her off when, accompanied by her longtime maid and a mound of valises, Gertrude departed to pursue her dream.

AND OF COURSE IT ELUDED HER most vexingly in New York. Gertrude was shocked by the stark aspect of New York of the 1880s—row upon row of indistinguishable brownstone houses and drab commercial buildings. Hopefully she sought out the bohemian quarter she had read so much about and found its stars to be stringy-haired women with dirty necks reading mediocre prose in fetid air. The distasteful creatures even tried to patronize her. She tilted her nose and clicked out. She longed to mingle with the city's higher literati, but she had been stunned to discover that belonging to the best San Francisco society cut no ice in New York.

Even more infuriating than personal slights was the cavalier disposal of her talents. She had brought along her much-

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***Typical of Gertrude's strong-willed heroines was Gita of* The Crystal Cup, *seen here in the act of taming an impulsive lover by the infliction of "an abraded shin, a scratch across his cheek, and a loosened front tooth."***

rejected novel on reincarnation and suicide, and soon after arriving, she began making the rounds of those publishers whose rejections had been the least insulting. Wearing a fetching widow's rouche on her hat and flashing her most dazzling smile, she asked each in turn to reconsider. Unhesitatingly, all refused.

At length she discovered a small, new publisher who was not put off by her theme, her highly-charged verbs, and her unblushing expressiveness. Publication day brought telegrams of congratulations from San Francisco and columns of abusive criticism in New York. The sum of the strictures was that this irresponsible young western woman had invaded polite society and committed an unspeakable nuisance; the sooner she retreated to her native wilds the better. She vowed she would force the critics to an about-face with another novel already under way.

It was *Hermia Suydam*. Determinedly scribbling in her tiny flat, Gertrude put much of herself into Hermia. Instead of thirsting for fame, however, homely Hermia pines to be beautiful; left on the beach while her prettier sisters and cousins waltz into matrimony, she becomes a spectator of life. When she suddenly inherits a million dollars she seeks out a skilled

doctor to recast her features. Men flock to her flower face, but having observed matrimony's dullness and tyrannies, she shuns marriage and quite without shame takes a handsome lover.

Another new and inexperienced publisher delivered *Hermia Suydam* to the world. Then came the deluge! The invective heaped upon it made the swipes at the first book look like a warm-up. Among the terms Hermia's exploits inspired were "crude abnormality," "lurid sensationalism," and "gross obscenity." Not only had she undone God's handiwork, but she had flouted the hallowed tradition that held that spinsters were supposed to wither away over their crochet and potted plants instead of blooming in illicit love.

But there was more to it than moral indignation. In those days nearly all literary critics were men, and between the lines was detectable an annoyance at the author's worldly attitudes—a far cry from the syrupy sentimentality being spooned out by the run of women writers. It wasn't Hermia's daring that irked them so much as Gertrude's. She smacked of the "clever woman," who was still very much *persona non grata* on the American scene.

That her break might come in Europe occurred to her upon opening a social invitation. A family connection, then living in Paris, wrote suggesting she come over for a lengthy visit. Dallying with the idea, she saw a trip abroad as an opportunity to investigate publishing possibilities in England. She had heard of a London publisher who reprinted American novels in paperback. She shipped him her much-maligned pair, hoping their notoriety had not preceded them, then boarded a ship for Le Havre. She was thirty, and her dream, although battered, was still pulsing.

A few weeks after arriving in Paris, she got a letter from the London publisher saying her books were on the press and enclosing a handsome check. Surely an omen! Buoyant with hope, she crossed the channel and entered London to a fanfare of good reviews. Even the distinguished critic William Sharp writing in the influential *Spectator* liked her Hermia. The English delighted in her headstrong heroines who rushed in pell-mell where the proper spurned to tread. What American critics had called abnormal and farfetched, the English termed "true realism." American realism, they meant, of course; situated an ocean away it posed no threat to their orderly existence. But the English also admired her terse, vigorous style, which defied the formal American writing tradition laid down by the New England school. Sharp took her in tow and introduced her about London as "the coming American writer," and to her surprise she found herself launched socially as well as professionally. Gertrude's English hosts were fascinated by her originality and her habit of freely speaking her mind, both being assets at dinner parties and offering little risk—any excesses might be written off as American.

Gertrude was immediately enamored of the land of her Franklin ancestors. But while pleased with her London reception, not for a moment could she forget New York. It was as though she had been invited to the ball, but only after the beau of her choice had spurned her. New York had yet to be won, and she continued to dangle lures in the form of her choicest short stories. Hoping her London credentials might have conferred a new sheen, she took especial pains to have a new book, *Los Cerritos,* published in New York. The result was no better than before: she was partly ignored, partly panned, with the added criticism that she had depicted her countrymen unfavorably abroad.

Following a lengthy visit back to California, she looked in on New York and found it palpitating over a murder trial that involved a poisoning. Reasoning that a novel constructed around such a situation would have a built-in appeal for New York readers, she settled down to researching the book she would call *Patience Sparhawk and Her Times.* She attended New York courts, studied prosecution methods, and mastered poisoning technique. All of her heroines had been of an independent cast, but the character of Patience almost classically symbolized the revolt of woman against the tyranny of man in his self-made world. She poured into it much of her own matrimonial experience, including George himself, who filled the role of the tyrant, oozing Neanderthal dominance from every pore and blustering toward his just deserts, extermination by poison.

Not one American publisher would touch the book. So she returned to England, where she succeeded in placing it with the leading London publisher, John Lane. Its publication drew such superlatives as "brilliant," "scintillating," "singularly interesting," and "altogether a novel to admire." A leading feminist praised it for "the impetus it has given the spirit of independence of women," and the eminent literary dictator of the Presbyterians—Rev. Robertson Nicoll, called its author "the first of our women novelists." Thus encouraged, the publisher distributed her book in the United States, where it received not a single favorable review but did find a market that would accelerate and continue for two decades. In time American critics would characterize it as a pioneer book that played a large part in loosening the shackles of women both in life and literature.

But that was still to come. At the time, scanning her disastrous New York reviews, Gertrude thought the critics, vexed at having their opinions contradicted in London, would never judge her fairly. But what if she published anonymously?

The notion of conspiracy exhilarated her. She again crossed the Atlantic and established herself in the Adirondacks, then a favored resort of fashionable New Yorkers. In the vast rambling frame hotels, she mingled gayly with the glittering hedonistic throng, eyes and ears alert for foibles and excesses. Taming down her realism, she wrote a satiric novel in the form of letters from an English noblewoman to an English friend reporting on the astonishing social and literary types one encountered there among the scrub pines. Her portrayals of

*Continued on page 60*

# FROM GLASS TO WOOD

by Ed Holm

THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHS in newspapers, magazines, and books is such an ordinary part of modern culture that we give little or no thought to this convenience. Yet, for more than a half-century after the invention of the daguerreotype in 1839, true photojournalism was beyond the realm of possibility because no practical and inexpensive mechanical means of reproducing photographs on the printed page existed. Instead, publishers of the 1800s had to rely on the same basic means of illustration used since the birth of printing: the hand-carved woodcut or wood engraving.

Employed during the Middle Ages in religious works and refined to a high degree by such artists as the German Albrecht Dürer and the Englishman Thomas Bewick, wood-block illustration enjoyed a massive rebirth in popularity during the mid-1800s with the appearance and immediate success of the several great weekly news journals, notably *The Illustrated London News*, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, and *Harper's Weekly*. Each issue contained dozens of engravings depicting events and topics of current interest, based on paintings, drawings by staff artists, and frequently, daguerreotypes or wet-plate portraits and views by leading photographers.

Although simple in concept, the process of creating wood engravings was a highly exacting craft that demanded the combined skills of the artist, engraver, and pressman. The procedure, whether reproducing a painting, drawing, or photograph, was essentially the same. First an artist had to redraw the picture in reverse on the end-grain surface of a smooth block of boxwood (in later years a photographic process replaced this step). If the illustration was to be a large one, several pieces of wood often had to be bolted together to achieve the required size. Then, peering through a magnifying glass and wielding a tempered steel graver or "burin" (see illustration above), a skilled engraver painstakingly cut away the areas between the lines to create the various effects of light, shadow, and form. Such work required long hours of intense concentration, and if a picture was large and time short, the block was often broken up into its respective pieces and several engravers put to work at once. Impressions could be made directly from the completed engraving, but since mechanical presses easily damaged wood blocks, most publishers preferred to use a metal "electrotype" printing plate made from an intermediate wax impression.

Although several times removed from the original scene and lacking fine detail and a sense of immediacy, wood engravings made from photographs possessed considerable charm in their own right. And, as demonstrated by the view on the following two pages, their strong lines and heavy masses were well-suited to dramatic interpretations of frontier scenes. Some of our most romantic and colorful views of the Old West exist as wood engravings based on photographs in the popular journals of the 1870s and '80s.

With the widespread adoption of a practical halftone printing process in the mid-1890s, wood engraving as a tool of journalism rapidly fell out of favor and within a few years had become almost a lost art.

**Ed Holm** *is managing editor of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

***Overleaf: This dramatic view of a two-engine passenger unit of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, perched on a narrow ledge in Colorado's Rio Las Animas Canyon, provided a fine subject for the combined artistry of photographer and wood engraver. Captured on a large-format wet plate negative by pioneer documentarian William Henry Jackson (half of his original photograph appears on the left-hand page), the scene was duplicated in line by an anonymous craftsman and published as a two-page spread (of which the right half appears here) in the September 25, 1886, edition of* Harper's Weekly. *Although he copied the scene with remarkable fidelity, the engraver yielded to artistic license in one respect: the moody cloudscape we see here did not appear in the photograph.***

ABOVE: NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY FOLLOWING TWO PAGES: WESTERN HISTORY DEPARTMENT, DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY, AND THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF COLORADO

# Frank Tenney Johnson
# Master of the Old West

**Less well known than his contemporaries Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell, this great artist created canvasses rich in aesthetic beauty, romance, and the flavor of the past**

by Harold McCracken

AMERICAN ART has been enriched by the work of a number of artists who devoted their talents to realistically portraying the factual story of the early West. There is nothing in our history that is more dramatically colorful or more purely American than that story; and this school of artists has provided the most comprehensive portrayal that we have of that era. The pictorial record is more understandable than all the volumes of history that have been written on the subject.

Most widely and highly regarded among these western artists are Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell. There are others who deserve recognition which has not been given, and probably the most worthy among these is Frank Tenney Johnson (1874–1939). Unfortunately, Johnson was not as prolific as either Remington or Russell, nor has he enjoyed as wide a public exposure. However, as a matter of record, he is the only one of this triumvirate upon whom the National Academy of Design has bestowed the highest distinction in American art, that of being recognized as a full National Academician. Founded in 1825, this august and erudite organization has for virtually one and three-quarter centuries been internationally recognized as the highest court of approval and endorsement in the field of American art, and only those so elected and designated as National Academicians have the privilege of using the cherished "N.A." after their signature. Frank Tenney Johnson was chosen to be known among these honored few.

Remington, Russell, and Johnson all portrayed the early-day cowboys, Indians, and pioneers in a realistic and factual manner, but their work is quite different in scope and perspective. Frederic Remington's art covered the whole West, both historically as well as geographically, from the first Spanish conquistadors in the Southwest to the last of the Indian wars in the Dakotas. Until the last few years of his life, this artist's interest was primarily historical. He was unfairly branded as an "illustrator," largely because he had what was probably the widest public exposure of any contemporary American artist, with his works being reproduced in the best magazines and western books of the era. The noted New York art critic, Royal Cortissoz, described his work as being "hard as nails."

On the other hand, the creations of Charles M. Russell were extremely insular. Known as the "Montana cowboy artist," he did very little that was not closely related to the Montana scene. He knew the cowboy and Indian riders of the northwestern prairies, for he had lived and ridden with both; and he portrayed these—as well as the pioneers of the region—remarkably well. There are many who feel that Russell is the greatest of all the western artists; and the same can be said of Remington. This is as it should be; art is a medium that appeals to different individuals in different ways, and every one of us is entitled to express his personal feelings in the matter.

While Frank Tenney Johnson portrayed very much the same subjects as Remington and Russell, his special forte lay in developing a strong sense of aesthetic beauty in the paintings he created—a quality in which he surpassed his two contemporaries. And unlike Remington and Russell, Johnson generally avoided the depiction of violence, only occasionally painting a scene in which powder is burned and horses plunge. Nor did he portray the red man as a wistful object of subjugation and reservation confinement, longing for past glories denied him by a sense of inferiority. Instead, he showed the Indian as a proud individual, glad to be alive in the traditional land of his forefathers. There is a high degree of romance, pathos, and poetry in this artist's work. Many qualified critics agree that the draftsmanship in Johnson's paintings is superb; that he portrayed the horse as well or better than any; and

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*This article is adapted from material in* The Frank Tenney Johnson Book: A Master Painter of the Old West, *to be published in November by Doubleday & Company,* *© 1974 by Harold McCracken.*

*The master in his studio: artist Frank Tenney Johnson at work on "The Remuda."*

that his nocturne scenes have never been equaled by any other American artist.

Frank Tenney Johnson was born June 26, 1874, on a small and unpretentious prairie farm about twenty-five miles from Council Bluffs, Iowa. Covered wagons drawn by oxen still passed by as Frank grew through boyhood; and listening to the stories of romantic adventure where the sun went down could only make a deep and long-lasting impression. "I believe that environment has much to do with the shaping of anyone's career," he stated later in life. "I am sure it did in my case. . . . I suppose, too, the fates must have been planning that I should record on canvas the kind of pictures you are familiar with. My boyhood days were filled with the interesting excitement of growing up alongside the Overland Trail that led directly past our pioneer farm; and the occasional slow-moving prairie schooners and weekly stagecoach traveling westward had a great deal to do with my devotion to painting the pictures I have."

Also vital to his development as an artist was Frank's natural compatibility with and fondness for horses. From his earliest experience in riding on cattle roundups as a working cowboy in the Colorado backcountry in 1904, he was both

*"Smoke of a .45": one of Frank Tenney Johnson's rare forays into the realm of violence.*

### Frank Tenney Johnson: A Thumbnail Biography

Born on June 26, 1874, Frank Tenney Johnson spent his boyhood years on a small prairie farm near Big Grove, Iowa. Times were hard and after several crop failures and the early death of Frank's mother, his father remarried and the family relocated on another farm in Wisconsin.

Inspired by paintings he saw in a Milwaukee museum, young Frank resolved to become an artist. Dropping out of high school to pursue this ambition, he acquired the rudiments of technique by working as an apprentice to local artists and engraving companies. He also became active in the Milwaukee Art Students League and in 1895 spent several months studying in New York. It was during this period that Frank became fascinated with western subjects, and he made several trips to South Dakota to paint the Indians and scenery.

On December 31, 1896, Frank married Vinnie Reeve Francis, thereby forging a treasured lifelong bond. In 1902 the young couple moved to New York City and Frank began his professional career. In 1904, with the aid of a railroad pass provided by *Field & Stream* Magazine, Frank

BOTH PAGES: THE EXCHANGE BANK & TRUST COMPANY, DALLAS

*"The Remuda": as an artist-cowboy on a Colorado ranch, young Johnson gained an early appreciation of the horse.*

spent several months touring the West. Out of this sketching tour emerged the major themes that would characterize his greatest paintings: horses and ranch life, the Indians of the Southwest, and the depiction of nocturne scenes.

During the next decade Frank Tenney Johnson emerged as one of the country's leading illustrators, obtaining frequent commissions from major book publishers and such periodicals as *Harper's Weekly*, *Century*, and *Cosmopolitan* magazines. By the 1920s, however, he was devoting most of his attention to formal easel painting. Frank and Vinnie made numerous sketching trips through the West, and in 1922 they opened a second studio in Alhambra, California, where they eventually established their principal home. They also built a studio in Wyoming, where they usually spent their summers.

In 1929 Frank was elected an Associate of the National Academy (a rare honor for a western artist) and in 1937 he received the ultimate distinction of being selected a full Academician. Frank Tenney Johnson died on January 1, 1939—at the age of sixty-four and at the height of his creative powers—as the result of contracting spinal meningitis.

*"Beneath the Southern Moon": probably no artist has equaled Johnson's mastery of the nocturne.*

a fine horseman and a perceptive viewer of these animals. "A small mistake in painting a horse is quickly recognizable to the eye of a man who knows his horses," he told an interviewer when at the height of his career. "Horses have as much individuality as people when you get to know them. . . . An artist who is a keen observer can paint them from memory as if they were standing before you, if you understand them inside and out."

When Frank Tenney Johnson put a new canvas on the easel, he almost always knew precisely what the finished picture was going to be. The subject was selected from the large number of personal recollections stored in his unusually keen memory. He generally had a photograph or color sketch for guidance. (Johnson was the most avid and accomplished photographer of the early-day western artists—more than four thousand negatives that he made for reference survive.) Sometimes it would be the mountain background in a picture that inspired him, and a photo of a cowboy or Indian made at some entirely different location—or the composition might be conceived entirely from memory. Whatever the case might be, the final work was done with broad artistic license. Once the artist started painting he worked intensely and rapidly.

BOTH PAGES: THE EXCHANGE BANK & TRUST COMPANY, DALLAS

*"Santa Fe Traders": pioneer wagons rumbled past the artist's boyhood Iowa home, and later he followed them West.*

Johnson was a highly meticulous worker—especially when painting one of his nocturne scenes. He devoted a great deal of time to study and experimentation in order to accurately reproduce the colors found under moonlight and starlight, and he was continually endeavoring to carry this to a higher state of perfection. In addition to mixing his own colors, he had his own special preparation for the white underpainting on the canvas, which produced a smoother base for the image and supposedly added a degree of luminosity to the finished work. After completing the underpainting, he set the canvas aside for a period of a year or more to allow the coating to harden and properly adhere to the base.

Wherever they were shown during his lifetime, Frank Tenney Johnson's paintings received highly complimentary reviews, both by accredited art critics and by newspaper writers, who are not always entirely conciliatory toward art of any kind. The glamour of the Old West combined with the finest artistic qualities gave his work a strong appeal to critics and laymen alike; and this was particularly true of those qualified to judge from subject matter alone. Rarely are the two combined. But this was the case when writer Fred Hogue was inspired to pay tribute in a two-column story under the head-

BOTH PAGES: THE EXCHANGE BANK & TRUST COMPANY, DALLAS

*"Pony Express": the quiet drama of the historic West was a favorite Frank Tenney Johnson theme.*

ing,"In Navajo Land," in a March 1928 edition of the *Los Angeles Times*. It is more of a critical dissertation than a newspaperman's assignment well done, and is worthy of quoting in part here:

"As I stood before that canvas [one of Johnson's night scenes in the Southwest] in a salon of the Stendahl Galleries at the Ambassadore Hotel, my physical sight was dimmed by visions borne by the rushing memories of my own departed youth. For I, too, have stood in the moonlight on the rim of a chasm in the Funeral Mountains of the Navajos, and dreamed the dreams that Frank Tenney Johnson has so admirably put on canvas; and my fancy was able to supply what his brush was unable to tell. . . . I knew the artist had been there. To write, one must have lived; and to paint one must have seen. Canvasses like those produced by Frank Tenney Johnson are expressions that accurately record impressions. They are not produced in studios alone. . . . The moonlight is the moonlight of Navajo land . . . and because he knows these things and reproduces them so well on his canvasses he towers above his contemporaries. . . . His canvasses sing the legends of the range riders and of the Navajos.

"Russell knew the riders of the Northwest, but Russell is

*"Madonna of the Desert": Johnson depicted the native American with total dignity and respect.*

dead. Remington knew the cowboy and his mount and the whole story of the Old West; but Remington is dead. When Johnson is gone, the last of this trilogy of the trail and the range will have passed. As a painter of nocturnes, Frank Tenney Johnson is the peer of any artist that ever came out of the West. Russell and Remington could paint the sunlight, but when the twilight shadows began to fall they cleaned their brushes, assembled their canvasses and withdrew. Perhaps Frank Tenney Johnson is a poet who sings in color. There is a harmony in his canvasses that escapes our five senses. . . . His best is equal to the best in any company. He possesses the secret of color, of light and shade, of technique and composition. Perhaps, when he is dead, other lovers of the beautiful will write of him and his art what I have here written."

What more could the present writer say.

**Harold McCracken** *is director of the Whitney Gallery of Western Art and the Buffalo Bill Historical Center in Cody, Wyoming. He also is author of many books relating to the American West, including* The Charles M. Russell Book, The Frederic Remington Book, *and* The American Cowboy.

# Mission San Juan Capistrano

## *"Loveliest of the Franciscan Ruins"*

**Photographs by Marvin Wax**

*With commentary by Charles Francis Saunders and J. Smeaton Chase*

*Nine years under construction but shaken into ruins in seconds, San Juan Capistrano stands out as one of the most captivating of the twenty-one California missions established some two centuries ago by Father Junípero Serra and his Franciscan brothers. That the charm of this once-magnificent structure is timeless is suggested by the appropriateness of the following description, which remains as accurate in spirit today as when first published nearly sixty years ago.*

FROM CALIFORNIA'S Mission San Luis Rey to San Juan Capistrano, the next Mission northward, is some thirty miles—a beautiful drive if you can do the journey so; now beside the surfy sea, now over cattle-dotted *mesas* with glorious outlooks oceanward and mountainward, and now threading flowery *cañons* and *cañadas* among treeless, dumpling foothills of the sort upon which the Spaniards fixed the name *loma*. If your going be by rail, you alight at the station of Capistrano within a stone's throw of the Mission; and many visitors content themselves with a hurried stop between trains. Seeing it so in the noontide glare, they get little idea of the poetic beauty that enveils it when the shadows of evening creep over it, or in the dewy stillness of the early day, or, better yet, "in the pale moonlight," as at Melrose, to which its lovers delight to compare it; for it is of all the Franciscan remains the loveliest. Arrange, then, if you can, to pass at least a night at the quaint village, so populated of Spanish, French, and Basques, to say nothing of a sprinkling of other nationalities, that one of my fellow travelers told me he had once spent three months there and heard no word of English.

The founding of this Mission was an interrupted event. First came Padre Francisco Lasuén, erecting on October 30, 1775, a cross and celebrating mass *al fresco* in the presence of a few soldiers, servants, and muleteers; but hardly had a beginning been made when news was brought of an Indian uprising at the Mission of San Diego. The church bells were at once buried for safekeeping, and the Padre and his escort hastened away to San Diego to assist their comrades there. A year later—on November 1, 1776—Father Junípero Serra, with two other missionaries and a file of soldiers, arrived, found the cross still standing, exhumed the bells, and, blessing the place afresh, gave the establishment it first real start on its evangelical course.

The first Mission was not on the site of the present one; but, according to tradition, was some six miles to the eastward, in a locality marked on the maps as "Mision Vieja." Just when the move was made to the present site appears to be uncertain; but early in 1797 work was beginning on the great stone church, whose noble ruin makes the Mission's especial charm for visitors today.

Father St. John O'Sullivan . . . has written an excellent handbook of the place which should be obtained by every visitor. In it he states that the stone used in building came from Mision Vieja, the large stones being conveyed in *carretas* or bull carts, and the smaller ones carried by the Indian neophytes. "Each one walked bearing a stone from the quarry in the hands or upon the head—the children with small ones, the grownups with larger ones, all doing their part according to their strength; so that during the work, the place resembled a great anthill with the busy workers going and coming—those passing to the east empty-handed, and those coming to the west bearing their burdens." While the manual labor was all done by Indians under the superintendence of the Fathers, there was a Mexican master mason, sent up from Culiacan, who had charge of the stone-cutting. The church was something over nine-years a-building. It was cruciform in outline, and, when completed, was the most imposing of any in California, with ornamentation on pilasters, doorways, cornices, and capitals that commands admiration even in its ruin. . . .

The blessing of this edifice on September 7, 1806, with a two-day *fiesta* following, was a notable event. The ceremony was performed by Padre Presidente Tapis, assisted by the two friars from San Gabriel; and the vast crowd attending included the two resident missionaries of San Juan, visiting Padres from

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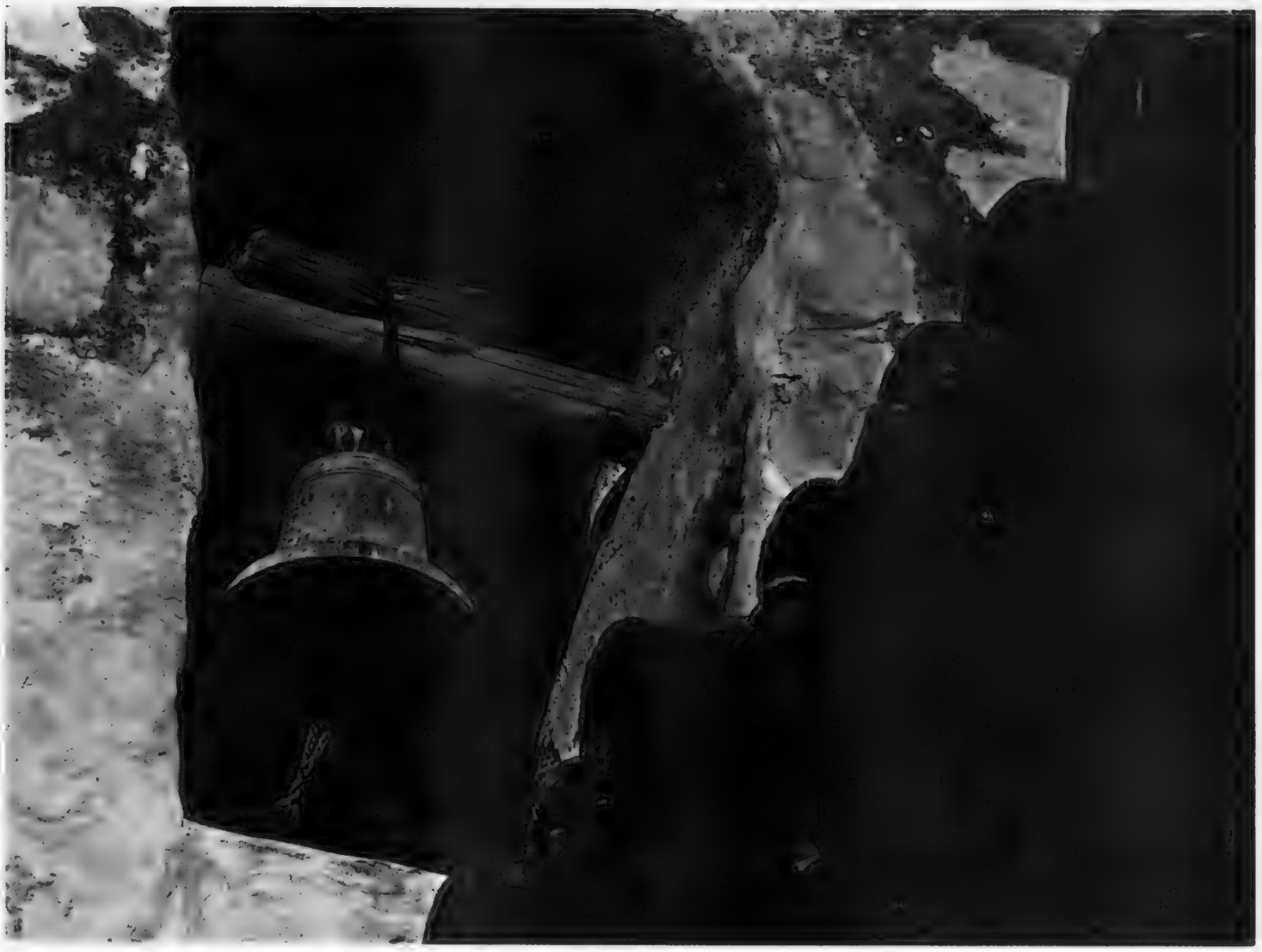
*This pictorial essay is adapted from material in* Mystique of the Missions *by Marvin Wax, to be published in August by the American West Publishing Company.*

Santa Bárbara, San Fernando, and San Luis Rey, the Governor Don Jose Joaquin de Arrillaga, military lights from San Diego and Santa Barbara presidios with their soldiery, besides much *gente de razon* ("people of intelligence": the term by which the whites were called, in contradistinction to the Indians) from all the country round, as throngs of neophytes from neighboring Missions, as well as all the San Juaneño neofitos, who themselves mustered a thousand or so. But alas for the shortness of human prevision! Six years and three months later came the tragedy of the earthquake, when the great edifice was shaken to a heap of ruins and twoscore of worshipers were crushed to death.

Barring one short-lived attempt during the 1860s (more destructive than constructive), the rebuilding of the church was never undertaken; and I, for one, shall be satisfied if it never shall be. It stands in its devastation a temple eloquent with the gospel of beauty, the stars its candles, the birds of the air its choristers, and heaven-sown wild flowers adorning its broken sanctuary. . . .

To the lover of artistic tidbits of architectural design the Mission buildings of San Juan Capistrano are a mine of delight. At every turn some charming bit of handiwork catches the eye. There are handwrought shelves fixed, immovable, in the thick adobe walls; wall pockets scooped deep in the adobe; cave-like closets and wood-boxes similarly inset between their fireplaces; hand-hewn ceiling beams, and snug joinery without nails; scrolls and designs of simple beauty worked into doorposts and lintels; and delightful mouldings about the doorways—doorways so low that even a short man must humble himself to pass through. On all this work is the visible impress of the human hand, having joy in the doing, appealing to our humanity and touching our hearts as machinery's impersonal output never does. So does the work of those vanished artsmen do missionary service to generations that never knew them.



NOT THE LEAST INTERESTING FEATURE at San Juan Capistrano is the odd arrangement of the bells in the wall connecting church and *convento.* These are bells of later date than those historic ones of 1775. Nor is this *campanario* the original belfry; for before the earthquake, the bells hung in the high tower of the church. As customary with the Mission bells, each is personified and bears its name cast in the metal. One states in mixed Spanish and Latin: "Ave Maria Purísima! Ruelas made me and I am called San Juan, 1796." Another is San Antonio; a third, San Rafael. The fourth was cast in honor of two of the San Juan missionaries, Padres Vicente Fuster and Juan Santiago, whose names it bears.

Touching these bells Father O'Sullivan has found many a tradition current among the older Spanish folk of the neighborhood. One of these he narrates in his "Little Chapters about San Juan Capistrano." There was once, it seems, a gentle and devout Indian girl named Matilda, who delighted in caring for the sanctuary and keeping fresh flowers upon the altars. By and by she grew sick, and one morning, at daybreak, she died. "Immediately, in order to announce her departure, the four bells all began of their own accord, or rather by the hands of angels, to ring together—not merely the solemn tolling of the larger ones for an adult, nor the joyful jingling of the two smaller ones for a child, but a mingling of the two ways to proclaim both the years of her age and the innocence of her life. Some say it was not the sound of the Mission bells at all that was heard ringing down the little valley at dawn, but of the bells in heaven which rang out a welcome to her pure soul upon its entrance into the company of the angels."

**Charles Francis Saunders** *and* **J. Smeaton Chase** *were joint authors of the 1915 classic,* The California Padres and Their Missions, *from which the above commentary is excerpted.*

**Marvin Wax** *is a longtime professional photographer and former university instructor who currently maintains a design and photography studio at Palo Alto, California.*

# *By Covered Wagon to the Promised Land*

*Traveling overland on the Oregon and California trails took planning, courage, and perseverance*

by B. J. Zenor

CORCORAN GALLERY OF ART; GIFT OF MR. & MRS. LANDSELL CHRISTIE

THE COVERED WAGON is now firmly entrenched in American lore as a symbol of the pioneer movements that opened the West. As happens to many such symbols, the facts about it and the trails it carved have become clouded in myth by the passing years. The true story is just as remarkable as the legends.

Records indicate that possibly three hundred thousand emigrants banded together to travel overland during the three-decade period between the opening of the Oregon and California trails in the 1840s and the completion of the first transcontinental railroad. The great majority of these pioneers were native-born Americans from the eastern seaboard. Perhaps 10 percent of the travelers were foreign-born, most of these being emigrants from England, Ireland, and Germany.

Groups planning to travel west, as well as the stores that would outfit them, often advertised for recruits in the eastern newspapers. Each April large parties of emigrants began to assemble at various outfitting towns—Independence, St. Joseph, and Council Bluffs were the most important ones—located along the edge of the frontier on the banks of the Missouri River. To get there, most began the journey from their homes in the East by railroad, canal boat, or steamer, then booked passage upstream from St. Louis by steamboat. (During the wet spring months the country roads the travelers might otherwise have used were frequently impassable.)

Fifty to seventy well-armed men and their families and livestock were considered a good-sized company—large enough for protection against Indians, small and mobile enough to obtain adequate pasture and to avoid undue delays from breakdowns. The first order of business for a newly-formed group at the fitting-out point was to elect a captain or commander, preferably someone who had made the trip before and knew what was involved. The captain's responsibilities, as described in one account of the day, were "to direct the order of march, the time of starting and halting, to select the camps, detail and give orders to guards, and, indeed, to control and superintend all the movements of the company." The captain was also responsible for hiring a professional guide, or "pilot."

*Benjamin Franklin Reinhardt's idyllic painting, "Emigrant Train Bedding Down for the Night," echoes the American dream of a golden Promised Land just beyond the western sunset.*

This was usually a mountain man who had trapped the country through which the party would be moving. He had to be familiar with every waterhole, mountain range, and desert in the region—as many as four hundred lives would depend upon such knowledge.

Each family signed an agreement to abide by the captain's rules and regulations; one such somber document includes a pledge "to assist each other through all the misfortunes that may befall us on our long and dangerous journey"; agrees "that the Christian Sabbath shall be observed, except where absolutely necessary to travel;" and finally, assures that "in case of a member's dying, the Company shall give him a decent burial." The captain, in turn, could be dismissed for gross neglect or breach of agreement by a majority vote of the party members. At this first meeting, a general fund was also usually established to purchase extra animals and equipment in case of losses on the trail.

Next came the selection of a wagon. Each family bought its own, usually following the advice and requirements of the captain. Wagon buying was one of the most difficult and important phases of the whole journey. Because they were inexpensive, poorly built wagons were sometimes pressed on travelers by unscrupulous entrepreneurs, but those who bought them regretted their choice almost immediately. Most emigrants were dissuaded from buying such equipment by widely-circulated horror stories of being stranded in the desert.

A well-built wagon was intricate and quite expensive. First the emigrant had to decide which kind he wanted. By 1845 most travelers had narrowed the choice down to two basic types. One of these was a simplified version of the famous Conestoga wagon and the other was a much lighter, smaller wagon aptly named the "emigrant" wagon. The Conestoga had been developed by eighteenth-century Dutch settlers in the Conestoga valley of Pennsylvania to haul crops and even to move complete households. The full-sized Conestoga was very rarely used on the frontier except on the level-graded Santa Fe Trail, and by freight companies in later years, because of its tremendous weight when filled.

*"The Road to Oregon" by W. H. D. Koerner suggests the diverse assemblage of horses, mules, oxen, wagons, and*

THE EMIGRANT WAGON was essentially a sturdy version of the ordinary farm wagon. Its flat-bottomed bed or "box" measured about nine to ten feet long, four feet wide, and about two feet deep. A person five feet tall could just stand up inside the wagon with his head touching the arch of the cover bows. The sides of the box were either perpendicular or slightly sloping. (A similar wagon having stepped-up sides was called the "Mormon" wagon.) The Conestoga, on the other hand, was approximately fifteen feet long on the box, five feet wide, and five feet deep. The Conestoga box flared out at the sides and ends, and the floor bowed up smoothly toward each end. The swaybacked top overhung the ends at such an angle that from end-bow to end-bow it measured about twenty-two feet! The wagon was a majestic sight, but a fully-loaded Conestoga wore out too many animals. So, in the main, the traveler chose the smaller, faster emigrant wagon.

Each covered wagon had three main sections: the running gear, the box, and the top. The running gear included all those parts below the box of the wagon. Different types of specially-selected hardwoods enabled each part to best resist the punishment the trail would be sure to give. Wheels were a veritable jigsaw puzzle of woods. Oak or hickory made strong, flexible spokes; elm or osage, split resistant hubs; and ash or beech, durable felloes (the wooden rim of the wheel). A cheaper and slightly less rugged wheel might be made entirely out of bois d'arc or osage orange. In addition to its strength, flexibility, or resistance to splitting, each of these woods was valued because it did not shrink much—an important consideration if the traveler did not want his tires slipping off at an awkward moment and leaving the wheel open to serious damage. The tires themselves were hoops of iron, heated near-red-hot and then shrunk over the felloes. (Some tires were built up from shorter pieces riveted into place.) The front wheels of covered wagons were made smaller than the back ones for maneuverability. Some wagons had front wheels small enough to swing under the box and permit a ninety-degree turn, but these were hard to pull on rough ground and usually wore out the stock too quickly.

*pioneers that went into the typical overland party.*

The wagon tongue was made of hickory. A safety precaution here was to make a vertical joint where the tongue entered the hounds (horizontal bars or braces for strengthening the connection between axle and tongue). This prevented the weight of the wagon from breaking the hounds when it hit holes in the trail. The hounds were fashioned from hickory and were usually braced with iron straps. The perch or coupling pole was also of hickory and was removable, so that a cart could be improvised should the loss of a wheel or axle make it necessary to abandon the wagon.

Next in importance was the box, where the traveler stored his provisions and equipment, and where members of his family rode when the trail was not too bumpy (emigrant wagons had no springs). The box was preferably built from well-seasoned three-quarters-inch-thick planks of maple or poplar, and was usually made watertight for fording rivers. In some wagons a deep false bottom was installed for storing supplies out of the way; in others removable boxes of half-inch pine lumber the exact width of the wagon bed were used. Very few wagon trains ever had any serious trouble with their wagon boxes, but many a traveler experienced a great deal of sorrow with the running gear.

The top was sewn from canvas, double osnaburg, or other cloth treated with linseed oil "to render it impervious to the heavy rains which are likely to be encountered on the waters of the Kansas, and on the Platte." It was supported by five or six flexible hickory "bows" that followed the box lines and arched across at the top. Flaps or "puckering strings" at each end provided access; in hot weather (and providing there was not too much dust) the sides could be rolled part way up to allow some ventilation. The tops usually caused more trouble than the boxes did, and emigrants were advised to carry an extra cover along. Tops were ripped by tree branches and hailstones, and during severe wind storms had to be let all the way down lest they be carried away. The tops were frequently painted. Gray was a popular color, as was yellow. For a time it was a fad for each company to have an identifying color.

REMINGTON ART MUSEUM, OGDENSBURG, NEW YORK

*Just as popular lore tells us, travelers almost always formed their wagons into a circle at night for protection and to keep their livestock from straying. This painting is Frederic Remington's "The Sentinel."*

SECOND IN IMPORTANCE to the purchase of the wagon was the selection of the animals to pull it. Almost every American today carries a picture in his mind of a huge Conestoga wagon pulled tirelessly by six big, matched horses. In point of fact, the early emigrants scarcely considered horses for such use. Horses were strong and fast, but they couldn't stand the combination of the long, hard haul and poor food. (Most families brought along one or more riding horses, however. Frontiersmen cautioned them to "take no horses unless of the Indian breed; the common horse cannot stand the road.")

Mules proved far more practical as draft animals on the overland trails. They were comparatively fast, they could live on cottonwood bark in an emergency, and they didn't get sore feet. A six-mule team could haul almost anything under two thousand pounds without too much difficulty. Emigrants who crossed the deserts noticed that the heat didn't seem to bother mules. Mules became so popular that their price jumped from seventy-five dollars apiece in 1845 to one hundred dollars in 1859—quite a formidable investment for a man putting together a six-mule team.

Oxen, which worked extraordinarily well on sandy or muddy trails, were also highly regarded. They were better on long hauls than mules, being capable of traveling across the continent at a steady daily pace of two or three miles per hour. Another important factor was that the price of oxen between 1845 and 1859 remained steady at twenty-five dollars apiece. The admirable ox had many traits to his credit: oxen pulled a heavier load, didn't often stampede, didn't have to be staked out at night, and weren't likely to bog down in mud (mules had a tendency to give up when stuck in the mud and usually just fell over on their sides). The Sioux would steal mules, but they didn't want oxen; and unlike mules, oxen could be yoked up with cows in an emergency.

The choice of equipment for use on the long journey—and with which to begin life in the new promised land—was always a difficult one. The general temptation seems to have been to carry too much, as noted in this warning from an 1846 emigrant guide: "Many persons preparing to emigrate, who have been unable to sell their little property, have crowded all sorts of trumpery into their wagons, to be hauled to Oregon. This is generally thrown away when it has been hauled six or

COLLECTION OF AUGUST A. BUSCH, JR.

*Another staple western tradition is the emigrant train taken under seige by Indians, here brilliantly depicted by Charles Wimar. In actuality, early overland caravans were seldom attacked.*

seven hundred miles, and after it has broken down either the wagon or the team." Despite such admonitions, it was probably an unusual family that could overcome the temptation of carrying along a rocking chair, chest, or other cherished memento or two from their former home.

Equipment regarded as essential for camp life included a sturdy cotton tent (there wouldn't be room for everyone to sleep in the wagon), a small sheet-iron stove, cast-iron dutch oven and skillet, nesting pots and pans, tin ware cups and plates, two churns ("one for carrying sweet and one for sour milk"), a twenty-gallon water cask, gutta-percha buckets, washbowls, and campstools. For grazing his horses and mules the pioneer needed "good stout ropes, 60 feet long, with stakes about 30 inches long"; for maintaining his wagon he required a bucket of lubricant (usually either tar or a mixture of resin and tallow), carpentry tools, two extra ox-bows, and six open links of chain. Each group of six wagons carried an extra tongue, coupling pole, kingbolt, and pair of hounds. Farmers were enjoined to bring along "the iron work of a plough, a set of harrow teeth, axes, hoes, cradles, scythes, &c., including a small cast iron hand cornmill."

Firearms were a vital part of the traveler's outfit. The well-equipped neophyte frontiersman was never without a revolver in his belt, usually a Colt's Army or Navy model. (Accidents on the trail with these guns were distressingly frequent and often tragic.) In 1862 an argument still raged over the relative merits of breech-loading and muzzle-loading rifles. Hunters and mountain men preferred the Hawkins gun, proclaiming it the best of all. If the pioneer planned to do much hunting en route, his outfit included five pounds of powder and twenty pounds of lead for bullets.

Proper clothing was another essential. Wool was considered the best clothing material; cotton was found to give little or no protection from the elements. The male traveler was usually garbed in trousers made of thick, soft wool reinforced with buckskin, a red or blue flannel shirt, and a short heavy coat. On his feet he wore woolen socks and knee-high boots large enough to enfold the legs of his pants. The lady pioneer was forced to leave her hoops at home—a stout coat covering a sensible wool dress, and sturdy shoes, was her usual traveling costume. In cold weather men and women alike preferred moccasins to shoes or boots because they remained pliable.

COLLECTION OF MR. & MRS. J. MAXWELL MORAN

*William Ranney's somber composition, "Prairie Burial," tells a story too often enacted on the overland trail: the loss of a loved one by accident or sickness.*

FOOD WAS THE FINAL ITEM on the emigrant's list. Here the trend among early travelers seems to have been to underestimate the amount needed. As one expert cautioned, "It is important to take into consideration the fact that the appetite is almost universally increased by traveling. It is peculiarly so on the way across the Rocky Mountains. The rough manner of living which it is necessary for the traveler to adopt, together with the purity of the atmosphere, the constant and wholesome exercise, and the various scenes and incidents daily presented, which tend to divert the mind, all have a great tendency to promote uncommon good health, and consequently, uncommon good appetites."

Meat for the trail consisted mainly of bacon and pork. Any beef the pioneers ate was taken along on the hoof and fed on the rich prairie grasses. When traveling in cool climates, bacon was packed in one-hundred-pound sacks. In warm locales, the bacon and pork were put into boxes in the wagon bottom and surrounded with an insulating layer of bran to prevent the fat from melting. With proper curing, pork could keep for several months. Another staple for emigrants was pemmican, prepared from buffalo meat cut into thin flakes and dried before a slow fire or in the sun. Pounded between two stones to reduce it to a powder, the pemmican was then stored in a bag of animal hide with the hair on the outside. Pemmican was eaten uncooked or mixed with flour and boiled.

The traveler carried his flour supply in one-hundred-pound double canvas bags. Butter was boiled and the top scum skimmed off until the remaining substance appeared as clear as oil. This was packed in tin canisters and soldered shut. Sugar was stored in india rubber or gutta-percha bags to keep out the dampness.

The family that brought along one or more milk cows was doubly fortunate; a churnful of milk carried in the bouncing wagon would be transformed into butter by evening.

Dried vegetables provided a compact food much favored by the pioneers. To prepare this, mixed vegetables were sliced very thin and squeezed in a powerful press to remove the juices. The solid cakes were then baked in an oven until rock-hard. When boiled on the trail, a piece half the size of a man's hand swelled to the size of a dish and fed four people. A single portion weighed only one ounce and a cubic yard of this substance made sixteen thousand rations!

STANFORD UNIVERSITY MUSEUM OF ART, STANFORD COLLECTION

*"The loss of a single ox is the loss of a yoke. . . . The loss of a yoke is often practically the loss of the whole team," warned one emigrant's guide. Here a family faces disaster in Charles Nahl's "Crossing the Plains."*

Cold flour—a Mexican and Indian dish—was another food that the pioneers found both useful and tasty. To make this, the pioneer wife ground a small quantity of corn to the consistency of coarse meal, then added a little sugar and cinnamon. Mixed with water, this made a palatable drink. Cold flour was popular with scouts and with those who wished to carry as little food as possible—a half bushel would last a man a month.

Antiscorbutic supplies were important for the prevention of scurvy. The emigrants took citric acid along with their other supplies. At regular intervals they mixed this with sugar, water, and a few drops of essence of lemon to make a very passable lemonade. Other antiscorbutics that could be found along the trail were wild onions, wild grapes, and various greens.

A typical minimum list of provisions for one adult traveling by covered wagon from the Missouri River to California included the following: 200 pounds of flour or hard break; 75 pounds of bacon or pork, plus beef on the hoof; 15 pounds of coffee; 25 pounds of sugar; 2 pounds of saleratus or yeast for bread; 10 pounds of salt. Although cautioned that they must depend on what they could carry and not count on living off the land, emigrants were usually successful in killing a considerable amount of game en route. Buffalo, deer, antelope, bears, waterfowl, jackrabbits, and fish from streams all provided welcome changes of diet. The resourceful travelers also gathered berries, wild onions, mustard, mint, and wild peas.

Thus encumbered with equipment, foodstuffs, and passengers, a fully-loaded covered wagon ranged in weight from about 1,500 to 2,500 pounds at the beginning of its long journey. To draw this load, experts recommended the use of three or four yoke of oxen (two oxen per yoke) or six mules—an investment in wagon and team of three to six hundred dollars, with a cost of perhaps another six hundred dollars for supplies.

The travelers usually spent a week or two getting all of their supplies together. Miners stocked up on picks, axes, and gold pans; farmers sought the best deal on a shiny plow. Shopkeepers as a rule did not extend credit to the pioneers; there was too great a risk that the travelers might not make it. And since most of the trekkers were starting with a clean-wiped slate, they in turn did not like to be beholden to anyone.

OREGON STATE HIGHWAY DIVISION

*"The emigrant . . . may cherish a reasonable hope that he will arrive at the end of his journey safely and in*

FINALLY, the voyagers were ready to hit the trail. By May the spring floods had subsided, the grass was green and growing, and the ground no longer too muddy for travel. The selection of departure time was of vital importance: start a week or two too soon and there might not be enough forage; delay too long and you might not get across the Sierra before arrival of the fall snows, or through the Cascades before the onset of the rainy season.

With dawn's first light a bugle call or rifle shot would announce the hour for awakening, and outriders soon began to herd in the grazing cattle and oxen. By seven breakfast was completed, camp equipment stowed, and the wagons and teams lined up single-file with women and children aboard. Those assigned to drive the livestock took their places, and the scouts for the day fanned out ahead. Then, with a loud cracking of whips and choice words directed at unruly beasts, the great five-month, two-thousand-mile adventure began.

Mule teams could be driven from atop the wagon boxes, but oxen usually were guided by men walking alongside. All of the animals understood the simple commands "giddap," "gee" (turn right), "haw" (turn left), and "whoa." In midday—hopefully at a good watering and grazing spot—the pilgrims stopped for a four- or five-hour rest period, with time for lunch and a nap in the prairie heat. By midafternoon the journey resumed. Moving slower now, the caravan continued on until dusk, when the wagons wheeled around a circle marked out by the pilot, and the animals were turned loose in the enclosure thus formed. The women set to work preparing supper, children were sent to bring water, and pickets were chosen and sent to high ground to watch for Indians.

Evenings had almost a holiday atmosphere. The prairie around the wagons glittered with dozens of campfires. Musicians gathered and singalongs were enjoyed. Almost every train had at least one person who could play a fiddle, and square dancing was a popular form of entertainment. After the singing and dancing, people generally gathered in groups to talk awhile. Imagine the whole population of a small town assembled in an area less than a block square and you get the idea. Besides gossip, plans for the next day and adventures of past days were discussed. The travelers as a rule went to

*season": Frank H. Schwarz's mural shows pioneers resting at The Dalles, near the end of the Oregon Trail.*

bed quite early, for a new day started again at dawn. Adults slept on the ground and the children slept inside the wagons. Bedding usually consisted of two blankets, a comforter, pillows, and a gutta-percha or painted canvas cloth to keep the blankets off the damp ground.

Wagon breakdowns were always harassing the traveler. Many accidents were the result of tires coming off the wheels due to the dryness of the climate. To prevent this, wedges could be driven under the tires to tighten them, or the wheels soaked overnight to swell them against the iron. If a wagon wheel broke—a real crisis—it was removed and a pole lashed into place at an angle to hold up that corner of the wagon until camp could be reached.

The availability of fresh water was another constant concern on the trail. When it became scarce, ingenuity was called for. During showers the emigrants suspended blankets by their four corners with a weight in the center so the rain ran to one point. From there it dripped into a container underneath. On mornings after a heavy dew, they dragged blankets over the grass and wrung the collected moisture out of them. When a quantity of water was found in a sandy place, a barrel perforated with small holes was forced into the hole as it was dug to ensure clear water and a noncollapsible well.

River-crossings in the West were hazardous because of the swift-flowing currents. If a river was shallow, the wagon beds could be blocked up a foot or so above the axles and the wagons simply driven across. When crossing deeper rivers, however, the pioneers often had to partially unload their wagons, remove the wheels, and float them across. A variation of this was to create a buoyant raft by strapping empty barrels into an overturned wagon box.

Mountain ranges were generally crossed through well-established passes so that—with the exception of the Sierra Nevada—their navigation was not too difficult. When travelers encountered a rare steep incline, they joined several teams of oxen together to pull each wagon over in turn, or rigged block and tackle systems so that the animals could pull downhill to get the wagons up. Descending steep hills safely was accomplished by locking the wheels with chains (covered wagons had no brakes) or by dragging heavy logs behind.

WILLIAM ROCKWELL NELSON GALLERY OF ART, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

*Thomas Otter's allegorical canvas, "On the Road," symbolized the end of one era and the beginning of another.*

LIFE ON THE TRAIL was generally healthful, but when a contagious disease like cholera struck it hit hard, and stone-piled graves of the victims were the earliest trail markers. Most deaths on the trail were from malaria, dysentery, gun accidents, and drowning. Sometimes children fell from wagons and were crushed under unforgiving wheels. And, occasionally, as in any small town, a death from a gunshot was not accidental. According to some estimates, as many as thirty thousand emigrants sleep in now-forgotten graves along the overland routes.

Among the most serious dangers pioneers faced were wearing out their animals by attempting too fast a pace; becoming stranded as the result of taking a "shortcut" (the Donner tragedy is the classic example); misjudging the distance between waterholes and losing the cattle and horses as a consequence; or running out of food prematurely. Travelers did well to heed the warning that "from the moment in which Emigrants leave the Western settlements, they should be exceedingly careful of every morsel. . . . Atoms make Mountains; and a little daily waste, in the course of five or six months, will amount to something very considerable in the eyes of a hungry man, when he is surrounded by a desert country where no food can be obtained."

Surprisingly, early travelers had little trouble with Indians. "One hundred men well armed," emigrants were told, "may travel in safety, by conducting themselves properly, through the most dangerous part of the country. . . ." But if Indians were rarely known to attack a large, well-armed party, they were not always so considerate of pioneers foolish enough to attempt the journey in small numbers, or of those who allowed their stock to graze too far from camp.

Despite all of the hazards, for the traveler who planned carefully, traveled prudently, and persevered, there was reasonable assurance of success and reward: "Being forewarned, therefor, the emigrant is forearmed; and although he will have some serious and real difficulties, yet when he arrives [he will] find a country which, in health, climate, soil, and productions will more than compensate him for all his toils, anxieties, and privations upon the way."

Many thought that the building of the transcontinental rail-

*But for many years after completion of the transcontinental railroads, wagons continued to roll westward.*

road would mean the end of the covered wagon as a means of emigration. This proved not to be the case. What was the farmer to do about a horse and wagon when he reached his destination? Why buy a new plow and team when both could travel along with you? Wagon travel was cheap. And time—as measured by the standards of today's hectic world—meant little to these travelers. Besides, the trip was enjoyable. Crossing the plains together was likely to be the greatest excitement a family would ever experience. Everyone was going West! It was the new Promised Land.

So, for more than two decades after the joining of the Union Central Pacific lines at Promontory in 1869, wagons continued their westward journey.

And today, though the boxes aren't wood anymore and the tops aren't canvas, covered wagons are still around. They can be seen on every major trail in the United States; we call them campers. True to their pioneer heritage, Americans still seek out wilderness areas where they can be as free as they wish, just as their ancestors did more than a century ago on the prairie tour.

FOR FURTHER READING

Few topics in American history are more replete with authentic romance and adventure than accounts of the overland emigrant trails. A good basic reader still available in most public libraries is *The Oregon Trail* by the Federal Writers Project (Hastings House, 1939; reprinted by Somerset, 1971). More recent volumes of equal interest include *Westward Vision: The Story of the Oregon Trail* by David Lavender (McGraw, 1963) and *The California Trail: An Epic with Many Heroes* by George R. Stewart (McGraw, 1962).

Contemporary documents now available as reprints include Lansford Hastings' *Emigrant's Guide to Oregon and California* and Joseph E. Ware's *The Emigrant's Guide to California* (both Da Capo, 1969 and 1972). For photographic tours of overland trails as they appeared to the pioneers, there is *Oregon Trail* by Ingvard Henry Eide (Rand McNally, 1973) and the soon-to-be-released *Ghost Trails to California: A Pictorial Journey from the Rockies to the Gold Country* by Thomas H. Hunt and Robert V. H. Adams (American West, 1974). Those wishing to retrace old routes can find a mile-by-mile guide in *The Oregon Trail Revisited* by Gregory M. Franzwa (Patrice, 1972).

**B. J. Zenor** *is an elementary school teacher and free-lance writer who resides at Fort Dodge, Iowa. Her special interests lie in the areas of Civil War and western history.*

*Army Lt. Alfred Sully arrived in gold-rush California with visions of dancing senoritas and soulful guitars ~ He departed with dashed dreams and bittersweet memories of "the happiest and saddest place I have ever lived in"*

by Langdon Sully

PRIVATE COLLECTION

*In the spring of 1849, Alfred Sully—an idealistic, gifted young army officer and the son of famous American painter Thomas Sully—arrived on the West Coast after a five-month ocean voyage from New York via Cape Horn. An 1841 graduate of West Point and already a veteran of the Seminole and Mexican wars, Sully was destined to spend most of the next four years on garrison duty at Monterey and Benicia, California. Throughout this eventful period in western history, he corresponded frequently with his sister Blanche in Philadelphia, and through his preserved letters we are afforded a vivid word picture of gold-rush California—and an intimate, poignant view into the heart of a man who found love and lost it.*

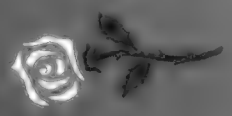
In the few months he had been at sea, Lt. Alfred Sully became apprehensive about what he might find in California. But as the *Iowa* rounded Point Pinos, the Monterey he saw was much as he had imagined it would be. The harbor was U-shaped, with high, sandy cliffs on one side and a gently sloping beach at the base of the U. Tall pines topped the hills in the background, and between the hills and the beach was the town. Here were the white adobe houses and red-tiled roofs he had expected to find, scattered about the hillside and sparkling in the sunshine. There was a fort with an American flag flying in the breeze, a customshouse at the water's edge, and a new two-story building beside it. Alfred was to be the quartermaster of the province, and this building was to be his headquarters and commissary. It was all much as he had pictured it. The only indication that everything was not normal was the presence of a few weathered ships that were obviously deserted riding idly at anchor in the bay.

After a few days ashore, however, Alfred found that Monterey was far from the idyllic town he had imagined. He could see all that he wanted to see in a few hours. The purebred Spanish were stand-offish; the Mexicans and Indians were shiftless. Most of the able-bodied men had left the town and gone off to the gold fields. There were no eating or drinking places, and the dancing señoritas and soulful guitars he had imagined as he left New York were only that—imagination. And, as he explained in one of his letters to his sister Blanche, labor was impossible to come by:

I would rather be a mechanic in the States than a gentleman here where every loafer has more money and can make more money than you.

A gentleman the other day arrived from San Francisco, offered a loafer on the wharf $4.00 to carry his trunk. His reply was, "Stranger, I'll give you two ounces ($30) if you'll carry it up yourself. I would like to see you carry that darned thing with your kid gloves."

# Love and Tragedy in Old Monterey



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My stable boys I have to pay $100 a month and even then have to do most of the work myself. At this moment I am scratching myself from the effect of flea bites, having been most of the day in the stable yard helping to harness wild mules to wagons—I black my own boots, get my own water, and when my room looks very dirty and I feel uncomfortable in consequence, I brush it out. You can imagine how often that is. . . .

The ships that brought us here have lost part of their crews and will lose them all no doubt before they can be unloaded. Some have been shot while deserting, but that [doesn't] stop others from trying the same game . . . Our men have mostly left us. A party of thirty started off together. The officers armed themselves, mounted and brought them back. They are now serving out their time in irons. So out of a company of seventy we have but twenty left for duty. Some have furloughs with permission to dig. . . . It is thought, and I think so too, that by sending the main body of troops to the mines, allowing them to dig for themselves, we may be able to keep up some semblance of military order.

Most of the people were too busy digging gold to cultivate the ground; as a result food was scarce except at the big ranchos, which had Indian servants. Alfred lived from hand to mouth. For a while he lived off the commissary. Wherever he smelled a dinner cooking, he would "ring in" in hopes of being invited to stay. Finally, he teamed up with a Dr. King and a Lieutenant Davis, and they rented a house that cost a hundred dollars a month and for which, according to Alfred, they would have to pay a thousand in San Francisco. They hired a cook and "lived well," the standard bill of fare being coffee, ham, flapjacks, and molasses for breakfast; beef, rice, tea, coffee, ham, and flapjacks for dinner; and for lunch and supper whiskey and pipes.

This arrangement broke up when the cook ran off to the mines. Alfred was then fortunate enough to be introduced to Doña Angustias Jimeno, the daughter of Don José de la Guerra, one of the most powerful men in California. The doña was a beautiful, cultured woman whose many generosities endeared her to the entire population. Alfred could not praise her too much in his letters:

When she found that it was impossible for the officers here to mess for themselves she offered them her house, for which her Spanish pride would not allow her to accept money. So the officers to pay her were obliged to make her presents. . . . She is a tall, majestic looking woman, about thirty or thirty-five, remarkably handsome, very clear complexion, red cheeks, black hair, very agreeable, very good natured and very smart. In fact she is a well read woman and would grace any society. Her oldest child is a daughter about fifteen or sixteen years old. Doña Manuela, remarkably pretty and gay, dances and sings and plays the guitar and is, like all Spanish girls, monstrous fond of a flirtation. I fear she finds this rather a hard job with me, for my bad Spanish sets her a laughing. However that don't prevent me from having a very agreeable time of it, for she has a good figure, a good foot and ankle, small hand, brilliant black eyes, white teeth, red cheeks and as lively as a cricket. The Don is a very polite Spaniard, is seldom at home. Most of his time is spent at his ranch.

I have been doing little or nothing . . . and though my time has been idly, it has not been unprofitably spent. I have become quite a native. Can live on tortillas and frijoles, smoke cigarettes through my nose, speak Spanish (though d–ish bad) and somewhat initiated into the mysteries of the Spanish Doñas, waltzes and Polkas. So that's not so bad.

About three weeks ago Don Manuel, the husband, went off to his rancho. There being no male in the house, Me Madre (that is the name she calls herself) though she is rather young and handsome to have so old a boy as me, requested me to make her house my home. So I have shifted my quarters from the barracks to two nicely furnished rooms and pleasant company. The manners of the Spanish of the higher class are very much the same as a Southern planter; in place of Negroes they have Indians for servants, and in this house plenty of them. They are generally to strangers somewhat cold in their manners, yet very hospitable. But once acquainted all restraint is thrown off.

Alfred's letters to Blanche showed that he was impressed by such aspects of California as the size of families, the speed with which towns sprang up, and the fact that the makeshift system of law and order somehow worked:

I just returned the other day from a visit to a silver mine, not now in operation. It is on the ranch of an Englishman who has lived in this town some thirty years, is married to a Spanish lady who has just presented him with his twenty-first child. It is a remarkable thing about these Californians, their large families. They generally marry when they are twelve to sixteen years old and have an addition to the family every year until they are fifty. Thank God they don't all live or the country would not be large enough to hold them all.

The officers give wonderful accounts of things at the Placers. Towns and cities springing up in every direction and everything showing the enterprise of the Yankee nation. At a town, I believe Sacramento, they gave the General (Gen. Bennett Riley, the Military Governor) a dinner. Two days before the dinner the lumber for the house in which they dined was not yet purchased; and the dinner that morning was aboard a vessel in the river just arrived from New York. "Go ahead" is the word. Many making fortunes but many will have to smash.

The Convention of Delegates elected by the people by the order of Governor Riley for the purpose of forming a State Constitution will meet here the first of next month [September 1849] and praying to be admitted as a state. At present the only law is the good sense of the better proportion of the inhabitants. In every encampment of the diggers they have a man who

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*This article is adapted from material in* No Tears for the General: The Life of Alfred Sully, 1821–1879 *by Langdon Sully, to be published in August by the American West Publishing Company.*

PRIVATE COLLECTION

*Alfred Sully inherited much of his artist father's talent with brush and canvas; this scene shows one of the "picnicks" he frequently enjoyed in California.*

with a jury of the inhabitants tries all misdemeanors, and there is no prison or men to guard the prisoners, they either punish by the lash or by the cord around the neck.

After about five months of duty at Monterey, Alfred was ordered away on temporary duty to Benicia, a naval and military station situated on the northern tip of San Francisco Bay, about fifty miles from the city. His only regret at leaving was having to say goodbye to Doña Angustias and her family.

LATE in 1849 Lieutenant Sully found himself transferred back to Monterey, little realizing how much the rest of his life would be shaped by the bittersweet experiences of his next two years. He found that the town had changed a great deal in his absence. There were gambling places and drinking halls without number, four hotels, and many restaurants.

The doña's house had also changed. When Alfred left for Benicia, her parlor had a sanded floor; the woodwork was painted a bright green, and there were a great number of common chairs ranged around the room in a haphazard fashion, with a big table for books, boxes, and knickknacks. Now she had done over the entire house. The woodwork in her parlor was painted white; there was a fine imported carpet on the floor; mahogany chairs and an upholstered sofa put the finishing touches on a room such as might be found in expensive homes in eastern cities.

The house had changed, but the doña had not. Her home was filled with a party of Spaniards who had just returned from the mines and were awaiting the first available steamship to take them home, so Alfred declined her invitation to move into his old quarters. Instead he found a log cabin on a hill, which he shared with a fellow officer, Lt. Tredwell Moore. They shared the cost of a servant and led a comfortable existence, one so pleasant that Alfred was sure he would soon be transferred to a less desirable station.

They started a theatre (which still stands in Monterey), where they produced what was said to be the second show in California. Alfred painted the scenery, wrote the play, and was the principal actor. Army officers played all the parts, male and female. "Although the acting was mighty so-soish," Alfred wrote, "it all came off with a great deal of applause

and the audience very much gratified, particularly as they had nothing to pay."

The nights he spent in what he termed "socializing." In spite of the fact that there were reports of new gold discoveries and people had begun to flock again to the gold fields, the military band had been brought back from the diggings. Dances and fandangos were frequent and furious:

The town has received its charter as a city, and in consequence has had elections and speeches for city officers, and then drinking parties and speeches to get the old officers under Mexican laws out of office. Besides which we have had three balls and one picknick or as they call it here, *meriendа*. The first was given by the officers of the army, quite a neat little affair and as select as circumstances would permit, about forty ladies and as many gentlemen. The ladies were more American and appeared better dressed than I have yet seen them. Were it not for their bad taste in selecting colors and their rather dark complexion they might pass under home. But then they waltz so well, have such eyes and natural grace, that they rather knock you. My friends were not there. Manuela and Teresa were out at the ranch and the Doña unwell.

The next was given by the officers of the County of Monterey. Being a political ball of course it was crowded and not quite as select as it might be. . . . Doña Angustias being unwell, it was thought her daughter and two young ladies staying at her house would be prevented from going also, not having anyone to act as the matrona, when much to my astonishment and everyone else's she turned to me. "If my son Don Alfredo will take my daughter to the ball, she can go." So I had the honor to act as father to three of the prettiest belles in the room.

The next ball was given by the officers of the City of Monterey and the picknick by the citizens of Monterey. This last was the most amusing of the whole. The ladies were dressed in their best silks and satins and many of them had put aside the graceful rebosa (I suppose out of compliment to the Americans) and clapped on their heads bonnets, but such horrors. They were all of one sort: pink, blue and white silk with feather to match and put on their heads in all sorts of ways. The elderly women looked like washerwomen and the girls like servant maids, but I suppose they will have to come to it sooner or later and we may as well get used to it, for everything Spanish is fast melting away before the go ahead Yankees.

The party otherwise, barring the horrors, was *muy alegre*. They had plenty to eat, a roast ox, and plenty to drink. They danced and played pussy wants a corner to the dulcet tones of a very drunken brass band, till at last, the liquor beginning to work, the men began to toss each other up in blankets and play leapfrog while the ladies laughed. However it all passed off very well and then wound up by marching into town in procession with the band ahead playing the "Grand March" from *Norma*.

The boredom Alfred had experienced at Benicia was forgotten in the whirl of social activity, and the lush countryside inspired the painter in him. (Like his famous father, he was blessed with artistic talent.) Alfred also developed interests in other kinds of beauty. He revealed to his family that for some time he had been in love with the doña's daughter, Manuela. He was thirty years old, and she was only fifteen. However, fifteen was considered a marriageable age in Monterey at that time.

Manuela had many suitors, and Alfred was afraid he would lose her. He was also afraid that her parents would object to the marriage, because the family was one of the oldest, proudest, and richest in either California or Mexico, and he had nothing to offer but "his good family background and reputation." Furthermore, he was a non-Catholic, and her family was very religious.

To his surprise, when he approached Doña Angustias and Don Manuel, they gave him permission to discuss marriage with Manuela, thinking she would refuse him. They had planned to marry her to a wealthy relative. When she accepted Alfred's proposal, her relatives and friends were so horrified at the idea of her marrying outside of the church, and marrying a poor American to boot, that Don Manuel had to find a way to save face.

The father informed me that for the present I must put it off until they could get the consent of the grandfather and the two Padre Uncles. But I knew that as soon as they should hear from them they would order Manuela to be sent to them for safekeeping where she would have been guarded more strictly than a nun in a convent. Since they had no objections to me but, as they said, were only in fear of the displeasure of the Doña's father, I said nothing, but taking the responsibility into my own hands acted as I did—although I must admit it was not according to Hoyle as far as the family is concerned.

A friend of Alfred's rode to San Francisco and back to get a dispensation from the bishop for a Catholic to marry a non-Catholic; he covered the 240-mile round trip in less than six days.

The next thing was to get around the Padre, Father Ramirez, to marry us without the consent of the parents. The next, to find an opportunity. Mrs. Kane, Captain Kane's lady, invited Manuela to her house on Monday the 20th of May. Her mother allowed her to go with a young gentleman, a young lover of the young lady's and very much in favor of the old lady. Lieutenant Jones dropped into Captain Kane's *by accident*. His duty was to take care of the gentleman lover. The Padre and myself were hid in some bushes behind the house. Mrs. Kane walked the lady into the kitchen. A white flag from the house was our signal to enter and five minutes later we were married.

The old folks are as mad as well can be. I went to see them and was invited never to show my face again. All the old folks are kicking up quite a row; all the young ones think it quite funny. I believe it's the first elopement that's occurred in California.

Apparently the Thomas Sully family back in Philadelphia was not altogether pleased either, for Alfred wrote home:

I know not what it is that makes a mother or sister dislike to

see the male portion of their family marry. You seem to have fears that poverty will be my lot. It is true on some accounts an officer should be the last person to marry on account of the uncertainty of their fate. But if you come to that, who is sure in this life. . . . I agree with you there are many reasons why I should have remained in a state of single blessedness, but I have seen many more officers married who get along well in this world, and have not in a single instance seen one single at the age of forty who was not miserable, with his constitution and energies undermined by dissipation.

But his father, Thomas Sully, explained their concern. He wrote in one of his rare letters to his son:

I have never so much regretted my not being rich as at this time, when I desire to help you in your new situation. . . . Certainly I am glad because you are married, but I fear your little wife will find it a hard matter to battle with a life of difficulty, if not poverty, after the indulgences she has been used to. Tell her that all we have to offer her are affectionate hearts, and a home with us, where she will be cherished as my other children. My dear son, never be betrayed into an unkind word to her; remember what she has given up for your sake. May God bless you both is my fervent prayer.

IN A FIT OF PASSIONATE ANGER that immediately resulted from Manuela's elopement, her parents kept all of her belongings, including her clothes. The army wives took a great interest in seeing that she was well dressed, partly because she was so much admired by them and partly to shame the parents. In a few months the doña relented to the extent that she sent Manuela's clothes along with some expensive gifts. These included a satin bedcover embroidered with silk and with a heavy fringe, together with lace-bordered linen sheets. Alfred commented that the spread alone must have cost $250, so "they couldn't be too mad," but he added that he slept better on a blanket before a campfire.

He wanted Manuela to go east and spend some time with his family, so that she could learn English and become used to American customs. When she refused to go without him, he requested a five-month leave so that he could take her to Philadelphia—but as had happened once before, his request was denied.

It was four or five months before the don and doña sent word that they wanted a reconciliation and would send for Alfred and Manuela soon. But their Spanish pride and Alfred's Yankee pride made it difficult for either to make the first move. The stalemate finally was broken when the parents learned that Manuela was to have a baby:

The old man, Don Manuel, is delighted, don't fear, to tell everybody that his daughter is again reconciled. She is the first of this generation to be married; being the oldest child and the favorite of her father it is a great thing for him to separate from her. I suppose there will be a strong move on the part of the family and relatives to have me resign my commission and settle down with them. Hints that way have been made, such as giving me a part of his ranch (which is the best by far in the country), building me a house, etc. . . . Don Manuel is old and rich and his oldest son (who is now at school in the United States) is but twelve years old. He wants somebody to take charge of his affairs. He has over twenty working hands, 3,000 or 4,000 head of cattle and nine or ten miles of rich land besides another ranch below of thirty miles extent and other properties besides. Four hundred acres of the land are fenced for cultivation, all the rest occupied by his cattle.

The family is an old Spanish one, the first and wealthiest in the land, and had I married in the house I could have made a good bargain of it as far as money goes.

Manuela's maternal grandfather was "an old Spaniard living at Santa Barbara who rules the Californians like a king on a small scale." His prestige was further enhanced by the fact that his wife was a Carrillo, one of those families who came to California with a land grant from the king of Spain.

Don Manuel finally persuaded Alfred to take a section about two miles square and to start to develop it. Alfred saw an opportunity to make it pay off quickly:

With the want of money, goods are cheaper than in the United States, many things being sold to pay freight. Strange that in a land of gold there should be no money. But of course this cannot last long. There will be a reaction. As soon as merchants at home find this out they will send nothing, and as California in nothing but meat supplies herself, there must be a want until it turns itself to farming. In view of this I have just made arrangements with two men to settle on some land for me. I am about to put up a sawmill and if I can find a good opportunity shall also go in for a flour mill. I went out to survey Don Manuel's rancho, but could not finish my work for the rains. I surveyed one side, about 20 miles on the banks of the river, beautiful land of all sorts: hills, plains, woods, rivers and lakes.

Alfred began to settle down. He wondered what it would be like to be a civilian. He bought a carriage for which Manuela insisted on making the curtains and cushions, while he did the carpentry and upholstery; they used it for picnics with their friends. All of the officers had been transferred or sent out to fight Indians who were raiding the ranches and settlements, so he moved into the house formerly occupied by General Riley, the military governor:

It was very large, having five large rooms on a floor with the kitchen back. I had very little trouble moving, not having much to move and plenty of help. The Doña and all her Indians were hard at work and in a day all was fixed. One large room on the right I use as a parlor, the back room as a chamber; on the left my office and back rooms, dining room and a spare chamber. The family cat, dogs, chickens and horses were moved in the nighttime without much inconvenience. . . . A hen on thirteen eggs under the house I transferred, eggs and all being put into a box and she has been setting there since without being a bit wiser.

He had two Indian servants who had decided to stay with

Manuela when she eloped, and a Negro servant in addition; the garden produced fresh vegetables. "Quite a change from an old bachelor's room full of the smell of segars and brandy. Lots of company; decidedly more jolly."

When his sawmill was finished he began to work on his flour mill:

I started the last part of my mill about three weeks ago and started off myself with the miller in the carriage. . . . Next morning, without supper or breakfast, except a pipe, reached the ranch. Don Manuel was there, glad to see me. After a good breakfast started for the mountains in the Redwoods. We steered by landmarks, no road. I reached with some trouble the top of a mountain where, in the valley below, was the spot fixed on to erect the mill. A deep glen filled with tall redwood trees from six to ten feet in diameter and over two hundred or three hundred feet high, straight as a plumb and not a leaf for over fifty feet above the ground, that made the woods look like the interior of some solemn Cathedral. In the middle of the glen a mountain torrent came dashing down through the rocks. Most beautiful, but how to get the wagons there?

Don Manuel knew nothing of it, though on his lands. I dismounted and on foot by good fortune found another glen leading into this in which with four days work and half a dozen men we made a good road leading into the place and two miles nearer. Here I have placed the mill and am only waiting part of the machinery which had to be cast in San Francisco to begin operations. I have orders for $2,000 worth of lumber to be paid off in cattle which I shall sell in Sacramento, so I think if I don't make anything it will at least pay for itself. Having put things in motion I returned.

At a river crossing on his way to Monterey, Alfred met a friend who advised him that Manuela had given birth to a baby boy. There was no doctor within thirty miles, and she was attended by her mother and two old women. The doña herself had just had another baby. She was living at Manuela's because "the Bishop has brought here some nuns to make a convent. They are all staying at the Doña's until their convent is fixed so they have at the house twenty-six souls to take care of for nothing."

For a while Alfred's house was in a delightful state of confusion and uproar. Crowds streamed in and out. Relatives and friends wanted to offer congratulations and to see the baby. The don was proud to show off his grandson at any time of the day or night, and Alfred was left more or less in the background, happy to get what precious time he could alone with Manuela and his son. At her insistence they named the boy Thomas Manuel Sully after his grandparents.

Alfred contemplated the future with reasonable expectation of a full and joyous life as a California don. There would be more children, more servants, more land and cattle, more activity at his mills, and more farming. Alfred was a truly happy man for the first time since he had left home. His wife, though small and delicate, had borne a strong baby son for him and was ecstatic and in good health.

PRIVATE COLLECTION

*Alfred Sully's beloved wife Manuela, of whom he said "No one ever approached her without loving her."*

BUT THEN THERE OCCURRED the first of a series of tragic events that were to embitter Alfred and change his whole outlook on life. The story told in Monterey was that an ex-suitor of Manuela's sent her some poisoned oranges.

On April 30, 1851, Alfred wrote home:

You must by this time have received my short letter announcing the death of Manuela. So sudden, so unexpected was it that I am only just beginning to believe it reality and not a horrible dream. She was well on the 26th, walking about the house. That morning she brought our child into my room and placed it in bed with me, rubbing her little hands together in perfect child-like delight to see me playing with the baby. She wanted to eat an orange that had been sent her but I, thinking I know not why they might be bad, told her no. Her mother who was present thought they would do her no harm; she would however, ask the doctor (one Dr. Ord, there being no other doctor in the place). The next morning with the consent of the doctor she ate that fatal orange which in a short time brought on vomiting that nothing could stop. Towards night she became better, much better and I laid down towards four in the morning with the full expectation of her recovering. I had hardly got asleep when I was woke up by the doctor. There was no more use for his service. I had to go hunt a priest.

Poor girl, what must have been her feelings while the Priest

*Continued on page 59*

**A Matter of Opinion**

# The Robin Hood Myth

IN THE YEAR 1851, the following handbill was circulated around the streets of San Francisco:

**Citizens of San Francisco**

*The series of murders and robberies that have been committed in this city, seems to leave us entirely in a state of anarchy. . . . Law, it appears, is but a nonentity to be scoffed at; redress can be had for aggression but through the never failing remedy so admirably laid down in the code of Judge Lynch. Not that we should admire this process for redress, but that it seems to be inevitably necessary.*

*Are we to be robbed and assassinated in our domiciles, and the law to let our aggressors perambulate the streets merely because they have furnished straw bail? If so, let each man be his own executioner. Fie upon your laws! They have no force.*

This was the call to action of the first of the vigilante committees, one of the systems of law and order in the West established when, in the eyes of the citizenry, the more formal administration of justice was either lacking or ineffectual.

What happened in San Francisco 125 years ago was typical, if not in format at least in principle, to what was happening throughout the frontier West. Justice was often arbitrary, emotional, dictatorial, unfair, and speedy. Many of the law enforcement officials—such as the Earps—could just as often be found on the wrong side of the law as the right. When formal courts and juries did exist, the inequities were seldom lessened; they were in fact often heightened through the use of weighted juries on the one hand, and bribed judges and/or juries on the other.

Perhaps it was this frailty of justice or the thrill of the chase or the American underdog syndrome that turned so many of these early-day lawbreakers ("gunslingers" adds to the romanticism) into folk heroes, the Robin Hoods of the West. Doc Holliday, Wyatt Earp, Sam Bass, Wild Bill Hickok, and Bat Masterson represented but a few of the western murderers who have achieved this mystic sainthood, which probably existed to a far lesser extent among their contemporaries, but which has since been embellished through the dime novel, Hollywood, and the greatest myth-maker of all, television.

It is quite easy to accept this concept when it is placed in the setting of the rip-roaring, pioneer West, "when men were men," etc., and surely we can find justification for these occasional incidents of man's inhumanity to man. As W. H. Hutchinson wrote (THE AMERICAN WEST, January 1970), "What should be considered remarkable . . . is not that there was turbulence and violence and lawlessness in the West-That-Was, but that there was not more of it in a society where settlement preceded institutions, and where survival for acquisition was the fact of life."

Such justifications, or rationalizations, while they may have existed in the nineteenth century, should have disappeared with the end of the frontier and the establishment of institutions and formalized systems of law and order. But the myth still surrounds the lawbreaker, and the Robin Hood syndrome continues. In the twenties, the era of the rumrunner and the bootlegger was eulogized, and the Al Capones were glamorized, both during and after their time. This writer recently watched a television rerun of a movie made in 1960 based on the life of Charles Arthur ("Pretty Boy") Floyd, in which he was characterized as some kind of a misunderstood hero, a victim of society who cherished motherhood and forlorn widows. When he was not shooting police officers or bank tellers, Pretty Boy was standing in the middle of the bank burning mortgages.

Such glorification of mayhem and idolization of criminals lead inevitably to a depravation of moral standards, and this logically encourages deliberate violation of the tenents of law and order. Add to this the decisions of a liberal supreme court that over the past decade appear to favor the "protection" of the criminal, and it becomes obvious that our society is nurturing the would-be lawbreaker instead of deterring him.

A new kind of lawlessness flooded the scene in the sixties, with minority groups struggling outside the established rules, with subversive elements disrupting college campuses, and with violent antiwar demonstrations being met by violence. It became fashionable for many of the young to belittle God and Country, the American flag, and anything else that implied approval by the establishment or that was part of the system.

Most recently, and as this is being written, the Symbionese Liberation Army has attempted—and apparently failed—to use kidnapping, murder, threats and any other means to achieve some ethereal goal that may never be explained.

Perhaps, in reflecting on the evolution of law and order from the frontier West to the present, we must agree with author Paul Taylor: "Is it true that what we learn from history is that we learn nothing from history?"

Donald E. Bower, Editor

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A MATTER OF OPINION *is provided as an open forum. Contributions from our readers are invited, but should be limited to 750 words and must be signed.*

# Maynard Dixon: Artist of the West

REVIEWED BY WILLIAM GARDNER BELL

IN A FOREWORD to Don Perceval's *Maynard Dixon Sketch Book* (Northland Press, 1967), Lawrence Clark Powell remarked upon the dearth of attention to "one of the finest of all western painters"

**Maynard Dixon: Artist of the West** by Wesley M. Burnside *(Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1974; 237 pp., illus., biblio., notes, index, catalog of work and exhibits, Remington letters, $28.95).*

and the need for a major retrospective exhibit and definitive catalog of Dixon's work. He expressed the hope that the *Sketch Book* would herald a Maynard Dixon renaissance.

The Perceval book was little more than an hors d'oeuvre. Wesley M. Burnside and the Brigham Young University Press have now served the main course with the publication of *Maynard Dixon: Artist of the West*. In the book and in the Herald R. Clark Memorial Collection and permanent exhibit of Dixon's work at Brigham Young University, Utah memorializes a cultural giant; it is California's loss that a native son's heritage was substantially preempted by another state.

Dixon was born in California in 1875 and lived much of his life there. He was a self-taught artist, thoroughly impatient in brief attempts to study and later teach art. Burnside notes that two types of art —the western genre and the American landscape tradition—"helped set the stage on which Maynard Dixon worked during his most formative years." Like George Catlin, Dixon lived and worked among the Indians. He was most influenced by Frederic Remington, while Ed Borein, Charlie Russell, and many of the Taos artists were among his intimate friends.

In common with W. H. D. Koerner, Harold von Schmidt, and N. C. Wyeth, Maynard Dixon began his career as a commercial artist. Although he published

his first illustration in *Overland Monthly* in 1893, he was quick to admit that he "didn't hit the ball until '98 or '99." Charles Lummis, whose *Land of Sunshine* Dixon illustrated, saw Dixon's art as "of the outdoors, not of the studio." By 1907, with his work appearing in *Harper's Weekly, Scribner's, Colliers, Century,* and other national publications, the artist was ready for a sojourn at the seat of activity in New York. Although he competed successfully with illustrators of the first rank, Dixon could not tolerate the tendency of editors to sensationalize the West. To his mind, it was false to see the cowboy always on a bucking horse and the Indian always on the warpath: "I'm being paid to lie about the West. I'm going back home where I can do honest work."

Returning to California, Dixon addressed himself to fine art. In 1921 in *Sunset* Magazine he set out his philosophy as an artist: "My object has always been to get as close to the real thing as possible—people, animals and country. The melodramatic Wild West idea is not for me the big possibility. The more lasting qualities are in the quiet and more broadly human aspects of western life. I am to interpret for the most part the poetry and pathos of life of western people, seen amid the grandeur, sternness and loneliness of their country."

Dixon put this philosophy into mural and canvas in the 1920s, and Burnside effectively synchronizes the artist's life and work. Following the execution of some of his best murals, Dixon became despondent over civilization's encroachment upon the remote regions he treasured. The onset of the Depression inspired him to produce some social commentary art of great emotional impact, and in 1934 he executed a fine series on Boulder Dam under WPA auspices.

In 1937 Brigham Young University acquired the eighty-five pieces of the foundation collection of his work. In failing health, Dixon closed his San Francisco studio in 1939 and moved to Arizona. He died at his Tucson studio on November 14, 1946.

*Maynard Dixon: Artist of the West* is an art book in every sense of the word: size, design, content, price. It contains thirty-two color and eighty-three black-and-white reproductions, which are enhanced by the matte paper on which the book is printed. The horizontal format is totally harmonious with the artist's extended style.

Maynard Dixon was poet as well as artist, and Burnside has opened the book's selections with appropriate Dixon lines. The introduction is prefaced by an excerpt from a poem entitled "Visionary":

*I am deep-willed to strive*
*so that if old age, or even death,*
*only make answer*
*I still can say,*
*out of all the intense devotion of*
*my days,*
*somehow here I have created beauty.*

Maynard Dixon certainly created beauty, and Wesley Burnside and the Brigham Young University Press have done the man and his work justice.

**William Gardner Bell** *is a military historian who collects and writes about western art. He has chaired several sessions on the subject at conferences of the Western History Association.*

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**The Uneasy Chair: A Biography of Bernard DeVoto** by Wallace Stegner *(Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1974; 464 pp., illus., notes, index, $12.50).*

REVIEWED BY FORREST G. ROBINSON

"I HAVE TRIED," declares Wallace Stegner in his latest book, "to re-create Benny DeVoto as he was—flawed, brilliant, provocative, outrageous, running scared all his life, often wrong, often spectacularly right, always stimulating, sometimes infuriating, and never, never dull."

Beyond question Stegner has succeeded, and in spite of a formidable obstacle. DeVoto was nothing if he was not furiously and persistently and vocally partisan. He loved fights. As the friend, and in some respects the protégé of his subject, Stegner might have made war on DeVoto's old enemies and detractors. Happily, he does not. *The Uneasy Chair* is a full, clear-eyed, admirably objective portrait of an extraordinarily complex and (in more ways than one) difficult man. Add that it is splendidly written, fully documented, and laced with photographs of DeVoto in his haunts and with his "Tribe," and you have some measure of its success. True to the life it records, this book is never, never dull.

Despite flaws that Stegner does nothing to disguise—including a face that Sinclair Lewis once ungenerously characterized as "frog-like"—there was something almost heroic about Bernard DeVoto. He was enormously everything. At first it was enormous rebellion. At eighteen he deserted provincial Ogden, Utah, cast off his mother's Mormonism and his father's Catholicism, and beat his way to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

What followed was a forty-year passage through a maze of cultural ironies that DeVoto was unable to penetrate fully until the last decade of his life. It was natural enough that young Bernard should have gained confidence at Harvard, but it was ironic that as he got settled in the East, he became boisterously western. He scorned Phi Beta Kappa, yet yearned for his own key. When Northwestern offered him a secure teaching post, he promptly resigned. Some years later, when Harvard turned him down, he made Cambridge home. He struggled to become a novelist only to wind up a distinguished historian. Writing in the effete, urban East, DeVoto wrote about the Wild West, a region that for many years he had professed to despise. Edmund Wilson wondered what made DeVoto so angry. Others must have wondered what he wanted, and perhaps more to the point, *where* he belonged.

Clearly, persuasively, Stegner brings light to these complex questions. Without doubt, DeVoto wanted success, enormous success, in the world of the intellect and *belles lettres*. No less certainly he believed that such achievement necessarily involved living in Cambridge. DeVoto knew that much at an early stage in his life. It took longer for him to recognize that it was the West—that artless, provincial, bumptious, dung-heeled region beyond the hundredth meridian—that he knew and, in some ways, loved best. In the upshot, DeVoto was terribly torn between habits of thought, style, even speech, and between allegiances that were classically eastern and western in origin. That internalized cultural conflict, only gradually recognized for what it was, helps to account for the fact that DeVoto was an angry man.

There was an excess of wrath against Van Wyck Brooks, for example, in *Mark Twain's America* (1932). At the same time, however, wrath resulted in clarification. When the dust settled, DeVoto had discovered the region that he was born in, the discipline that he was born for, and a large, appreciative audience. Those discoveries led almost ineluctably to a richer vein, DeVoto's massive, permanently valuable trilogy on the American West—*The Year of Decision: 1846* (1943), *Across the Wide Missouri* (1948), *The Course of Empire* (1952).

*Enormous* and *almost heroic:* why does DeVoto leave that impression? In good part because he is a recent avatar of a western type. He reminds us of divided, irascible, exuberantly creative Mark Twain; of Josiah Royce, a native son who wrote a history of California from Cambridge; and of many others. Quite apparently, Wallace Stegner knows the type well. We are in his debt for this powerful evocation of a part of ourselves.

**Forrest G. Robinson** *is a faculty member at the University of California, Santa Cruz. A student of English and American literature, he has written books on Sir Philip Sidney and Wallace Stegner.*

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**The Red-Bluecoats: The Indian Scouts** by Fairfax Downey and J. N. Jacobsen *(Old Army Press, Fort Collins, Colo., 1973; 204 pp., illus., biblio., appen., index, $7.95)*.

**Bloody Knife!—Custer's Favorite Scout** by Ben Innis *(Old Army Press, Fort Collins, Colo., 1973; 202 pp., illus., biblio., epilogue, index, $8.50)*.

REVIEWED BY JOHN D. MCDERMOTT

IN THE EARLY DAYS of our history, whites persuaded, cajoled, and employed Indians to serve as guides to aid them in conducting military campaigns. Their knowledge of the land, their skills as horsemen, their ability to forage, and their competence in combat made them valuable and valued auxiliaries. In 1866, Congress formalized what had been a regular if intermittent practice by authorizing the president "to enlist a force of Indians not exceeding one thousand who shall act as scouts. . . ." The end of the Indian wars brought a reduction of the number to 150 in 1891.

Both of these volumes describe the services rendered by Indian scouts during the latter half of the nineteenth century: one summarily and the other in microcosm. *The Red-Bluecoats* contains chapters on the service of the Pawnees, Crows, Shoshones, Rees, Cheyennes, Sioux, and Apaches. *Bloody Knife* describes the life of the Indian warrior who spent his mature years as a guide, hunter, and dispatch carrier at Fort Berthold, Fort Stevenson, and Fort Buford, and served as one of Custer's chief scouts for the Yellowstone expedition of 1873, the Black Hills expedition of 1874, and the Bighorn expedition of 1876.

Pursuant to the 1866 act, the army employed scouts as enlisted men. They received pay, rations, and quarters appropriate to their rank, and uniforms and equipment authorized for cavalrymen. Scouts performed a variety of duties: reconnaissance, carrying mail, hunting, herding livestock, finding water for troops in the field, tracking down deserters (at which they were terrifyingly adept), reinforcing Indian police, and combat.

The authors cite a number of reasons for the Indians' enlistment, ranging from such simple factors as boredom, the lure of attractive uniforms, hope of plunder, hatred of tribal enemies, and love of a good fight, to more complex motivators, such as a testing of manhood, a search for lost dignity, and an illusory quest for freedom. In the case of Bloody Knife, the desire to scout against the Sioux was partly personal. Born of a Hunkpapa Sioux warrior and an Arikara woman in about 1840, Bloody Knife spent his first sixteen years in his father's camp, where he came to hate a fullblood his own age who reportedly tormented and beat him. Innis makes much of the enmity between Gall and Bloody Knife.

A detachment of soldiers captured and wounded Gall near Fort Berthold in November 1865, but Bloody Knife lost his opportunity for revenge when an officer diverted the shotgun blast aimed at the prostrate hostile's head. Gall recovered to lead his people against the military, most notably in the campaigns of 1876. The denouement comes at the Little Bighorn, when "Custer's favorite scout" dies during the initial attack by Reno's column, ironically directed at the Hunkpapa circle. Yes, Gall was there. No, he did not fire the fatal shot.

*The Red-Bluecoats* might be viewed as an appendix to *Indian-Fighting Army*, a general treatment of the soldier in the West written by Fairfax Downey in 1941. Although Downey is joined here by a coauthor, the method is the same: read the available secondary works and a published diary or monograph, summarize the contents, and write a chapter. While the approach was commendable three decades ago, when any kind of synthesis was needed to advance an incipient discipline, the method in the 1970s is outmoded and disappointing to the specialist. In his turn, Innis notes in the preface that he constructed his biography of Bloody Knife "from the few bits and pieces of information and reports available." Consequently, the study is long on background and short on its protagonist. Both volumes, however, are useful and revealing, providing a beginning assessment of the significant contributions of Indian scouts to white conquest.

**John D. McDermott** *is director of the Office of Programs of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C., and a contributor to the book* Fort Laramie, *soon to be published by the Old Army Press.*

**Vancouver Island: Unknown Wilderness** by Ian Smith *(University of Washington, Seattle, 1973; 174 pp., illus., map, $17.50).*

REVIEWED BY NICHOLAS ROSA

MOST VISITORS to Vancouver Island see a civilized place, a rather short ferry ride from other civilized places. Their memories enshrine the lovely garden city of Victoria and its manicured environs, and some may not have heard that there is some pretty wild country up at the end of the road. Very few visitors realize that most of this island can in fact be classed as wilderness.

Purists might refuse to recognize it as "true" or untouched wilderness since industrial-mercantile man, during the past century, has at least tried mining or lumbering in too many places. Yet even second-growth timber can be as impressive, and impenetrable, as original climax growths, and some stands of the virgin timber remain—hemlocks with twelve-foot-thick bases, soaring upward toward three hundred feet. The sharp-ridged snowy mountains remain as forbidding as they ever were. Where man has come and gone the forest reclaims its domain. Vancouver Island, for the present, remains itself.

This island is no mere dot on the map. Vancouver is almost as long as Ireland. Getting from one place to another on it can often amount to a sort of expedition, except at its civilized southeastern tip. "Nobody," concludes Ian Smith, "could know it all, but it is a place that invites the attempt."

Smith's attempt has resulted in a handsome and worthwhile book. He is now regional wildlife biologist for the island, vocationally as well as avocationally concerned with knowing it. His color photographs convey samplings of the living beauty he finds everywhere, as do the black-and-white studies of Robert Keziere, and the fine clean drawings by Carl Chaplin. The writing, too, is clean and workmanlike, never deliberately "creative" but frequently flashing with color and warmth. Describing and explaining the natural history of this microcosm is a forbidding task, and the author has carried it off quite well. He is thorough but never technical, pointing to what can be seen, heard, felt, and known by the senses of the sojourner.

Microcosm Vancouver is a minicontinent, a place with nearly everything. Vancouver Island is even biologically distinct: many of its animals are separate species from their counterparts on the mainland a few miles across the straits. Wolves, Roosevelt elk, and wolverines thrive in numbers appropriate to the island's size. Vancouver probably has the thickest concentration of cougars surviving in North America. The bald eagle, dwindling elsewhere, holds its ground here. The sea otter is making a comeback.

Vancouver Island's mountains hold lakes that are often ice-covered until August, and the mountain flanks produce true alpine biome conditions, with the distinctive alpine plants and animals. Yet no peak in this range is much over seven thousand feet in height; Vancouver accomplishes much with little—or sometimes with quite a bit. Forested western slopes receive up to three hundred inches of rainfall a year. A few spots on the southeastern coast, in contrast, receive as little as fifteen inches, and cactus grows. As if myriad lakes, bogs, fjords, estuary inlets, salt marshes, and gigantic forests were not enough, Vancouver has two hundred catalogued limestone caves and possibly thousands of others awaiting discovery.

*Vancouver Island* is a book of natural history, not history, and of people there is little evidence here. Present as ghosts in the book are the Indians who evolved a dynamic culture on the island. That culture's giant fallen totems moulder under moss in the quiet forests; remnants of the people themselves occupy a few tiny villages. The white tide flowed in and overwhelmed them, and now ebbs. The island meanwhile tries to reclaim itself.

Vancouver is a surviving bit of the dawn world, destined to change. It will give way in the next few decades to civilization and technology, to new waves of settlement and development. There may never be another book like this one. None may be possible.

**Nicholas Rosa** *is a naturalist and author and a contributing editor to* Oceans *Magazine. He is currently preparing a book on the Pacific shore from Alaska to Baja California.*


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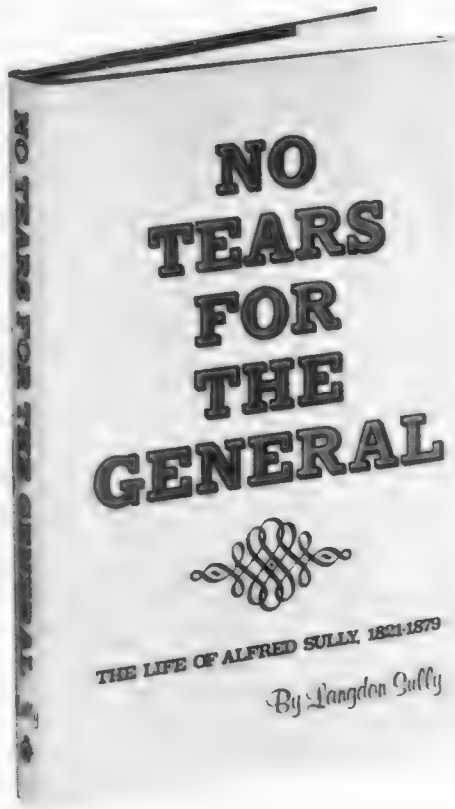


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Even more unique are the sketches and paintings General Sully made to document the historic scenes of his life, many of which are reproduced in *No Tears for the General*. He inherited his artistic skill from his father, the famous portrait artist, Thomas Sully.

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**The American Wilderness: In the Words of John Muir** by the editors of Country Beautiful, with photographs by Ed Cooper, David Muench, Kent Dannen, and others *(Country Beautiful, Waukesha, Wis., 1973; 192 pp., intro., $14.95).*

REVIEWED BY
JOYCE AND DAVID RODERICK

JOHN MUIR ONCE WROTE, "Every step and jump on these blessed mountains is full of fine lessons." And well we might look to Muir's words in facing today's problems of too much city and too little wild space. Mountaineer, naturalist, prolific writer, and founder of the Sierra Club, Muir affirmed the concept of wilderness as balm to the psychic bruises of urban man. The energy crisis, real or unreal, adds urgency to the American conservationists' cause: strip-mining for coal and oil shale, proliferation of nuclear installations and wastes, and the relaxing of pollution controls all eat away at the small patches of true wilderness left in the United States at a time when they are most needed for healing.

Appropriately, then, this book goes beyond the usual California orientation of John Muir and the Sierra Nevada, and offers excerpts from his writings on Alaska, the Southwest, and even a walk from Indiana to the Gulf of Mexico. Published in Wisconsin, near the area of Muir's boyhood, hopefully the book will reach those less familiar with his philosophies. The numerous sensitive and often dramatic photographs by Ed Cooper and others sustain and broaden the vistas from Muir's prose. More than a description of the wilderness, however, the book is the story of John Muir himself—from his humble beginnings in Scotland to his final niche as a giant among the men and mountains of the American West. Thoughts about his youth, the earth's beauty, the Creator, and his intense love of nature contrast vividly with the flood of sickness and stress pouring out on us from today's media. This volume deserves to be kept on the bedside table and read at random at the end of the working day.

**Joyce Roderick** *is a free-lance writer and naturalist;* **David Roderick** *is a professional photographer and director of Nature Expeditions International.*

**The Buffalo Book: The Full Saga of the American Animal** by David A. Dary *(Swallow, Chicago, 1974; 361 pp., illus., maps, biblio., appen., notes, index, $15.00).*

REVIEWED BY WAYNE GARD

WESTERN PLAINS darkened by buffaloes as far as the eye could see, a slaughter so devastating that in some places a man could walk for a mile by stepping from one carcass to another, and valiant efforts to save America's largest animal from extinction—all are depicted clearly by David A. Dary, a teacher at the University of Kansas, in *The Buffalo Book.*

Perhaps the interest in ecology accounts for the appearance of three excellent all-embracing books on the buffalo in a little more than four years. Dary gives less detail to the prehistoric bison and the Indian hunting than does Francis Haines in *The Buffalo* (1970) and lacks the firsthand study of current herds by Tom McHugh in *The Time of the Buffalo* (1972). But he tells the whole story, including descriptions of the habits of the buffalo, methods of hunting by Indians and whites, the campaign to rescue the buffalo, and the crossing of buffaloes and cattle.

In the decade in which he worked on this book, Dary delved deeply into the vast lore on the buffalo, both oral and printed. He comes up with fresh anecdotes that keep his work from being a repetition of earlier surveys. He describes the battles between buffalo bulls and explains the reverence that Indians had for the rare white buffalo and its robe.

Especially useful are his appendices, which give pointers to ranchmen who want to raise buffaloes, recipes for cooking buffalo meat, and a list of the many places around the country where tourists can find buffaloes grazing in public or private pastures. He estimates that North America now has about thirty-three thousand shaggies, compared with a few more than one thousand that existed between 1885 and 1900. His story of the decline and return of the buffalo makes a captivating book.

**Wayne Gard** *is author of* The Great Buffalo Hunt, The Chisholm Trail, *and other books on the West.*


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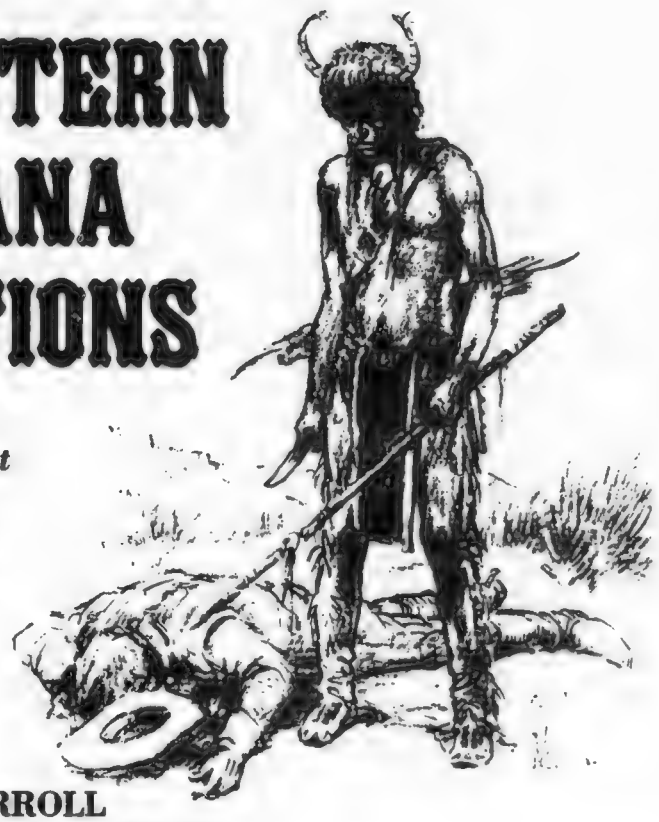

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**On the Shore of the Sundown Sea** by T. H. Watkins, illustrated by Earl Thollander *(Sierra Club, San Francisco, 1973; 125 pp., $7.95).*

REVIEWED BY RICHARD H. DILLON

OF THE MANY WRITERS currently active in the authorship of westernmost Americana—Egan, Faulk, Hutchinson, Nadeau, Gentry, Reinhardt, et al.—probably the most "literary," except perhaps for Lawrence Clark Powell, is T. H. Watkins. This is because he has a sense of balance that is as sure as it is rare; a sensitivity that allows him, equally, to intrude personally into an historical narrative or an environmental polemic without making a nuisance of himself. But Watkins is also a romantic, and in the best sense of the word. That is, he does not contort or inflate fact, but instead infuses reality with the magic of his enthusiasm as well as with intelligence and insight. In short, he appears to be matriculating in the school of such first-rate "nature" writers as the Englishman, J. Smeaton Chase, and the aforementioned Yankee, L. C. Powell.

This new book is different from the author's earlier volumes in that it is an unmitigated personal statement. At first blush it appears to be a testimonial, a tribute to the Pacific Ocean and its California coastline, combined with a charming autobiographical reminiscence of tenting at Seal Creek Beach and elsewhere on the Southern California littoral twenty-five years ago. But it is also a confession, again in the best sense, of the therapeutic value of the shore (akin to Muir's mountains), as documented by the salvage of one man from a life that had lost much of its meaning. The vita portion has moments of great poignancy, as when Watkins discovers how much his aloof father loved him as a boy. This is a testimonial to the true "good life" that one lived in harmony with Nature and man. *On the Shore of the Sundown Sea* is a book to treasure for its low-keyed humanistic message more than anything else.

**Richard H. Dillon** *is a librarian and author of* Burnt-Out Fires: California's Modoc Indian War, *winner of the 1974 Western Writers of America nonfiction Spur Award. His next book will be* The Siskiyou Trail, *to be published by McGraw-Hill.*

**Pat Garrett: The Story of a Western Lawman** by Leon C. Metz *(University of Oklahoma, Norman, 1974; 328 pp., illus., maps, biblio., index, epilogue, $8.95).*

REVIEWED BY KENT L. STECKMESSER

THIS IS A warts-and-all portrait of "the most feared and hated southwesterner of his time." Pat Garrett earned his place in history by doing the dirty jobs that others were too unskilled or fainthearted to attempt. But he was no paragon. Quick-tempered and overbearing, he drank, gambled, and consorted with prostitutes. His later years, until his murder in 1908, were a long slide into failure.

Garrett's life was marked by controversies, and Metz has provided a well-balanced account of each. There is substantial coverage of his relations with Billy the Kid. The sheriff was clearly ambitious, and so he associated with the rich cattlemen who wanted the kid put six feet under. That Garrett succeeded is a tribute to his courage, tenacity, and knowledge of the country. Yet his achievement has been distorted by popular writers intent on making the kid a hero, and in an epilogue Metz is especially hard on Walter Noble Burns.

Garrett's later and largely unhappy career is painstakingly reconstructed. As a county sheriff he tried and failed to solve the famous Albert Fountain murder case. His tenure as U.S. customs collector in El Paso came to an inglorious end because of personal mistakes and political pressure. Defeated and in debt, Garrett returned to his ranch near Las Cruces. He was shot in the back, a common enough fate for manhunters, and Metz presents his own theory about the killing.

Metz has a good feel for the desert country, and he reveals a talent for characterization worthy of a novelist. This well-documented biography is a valuable addition to the record of southwestern history. It catches the flesh-and-blood Garrett just in time; before he and the kid recede forever into the mists of western legend.

**Kent L. Steckmesser** *is professor of history at California State University, Los Angeles, and author of* The Western Hero in History and Legend.

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**Robinson Jeffers: Myth, Ritual, and Symbol in His Narrative Poems** by Robert J. Brophy *(Case Western Reserve, Cleveland, 1973; 321 pp., illus., map, biblio., appen., notes, index, epilogue, $12.50).*

REVIEWED BY BRIAN MCGINTY

THOUGH HE HAS BEEN DEAD for more than a dozen years, Robinson Jeffers continues to exert an influence on the intellectual life of America and the West. In the twenties and thirties, the austere poet of Carmel and the Big Sur coast was widely hailed as a literary figure of special eminence. In the forties and fifties, he was as widely dismissed as a misanthrope and poetic anachronism. In the sixties and seventies, he has been subjected to a renewed study and critical evaluation. Robert Brophy's estimable study of Jeffers's narrative poems marks the latest and most impressive contribution to current Jeffers scholarship.

Brophy, a former Jesuit and now a member of the English Department of California State University, Long Beach, is a scholar of depth, breadth, and enthusiasm. His book represents a careful analysis of the mythic, ritual, and symbolic intentions and sources of six of Jeffers's major poems. The son of a professor of Old Testament literature, himself trained in classical languages and literature, Jeffers drew heavily upon ancient myths—Greek, Teutonic and Hebraic—in the construction of his epic poems. His self-proclaimed intention—much like that of ancient dramatists—was to create epics "like the ceremonial dances of primitive people . . . a sort of essential ritual, from which the real action develops on another plane."

Brophy laments the fact that many critics have based unfavorable judgments of Jeffers's work on misconceptions of his purposes and objectives. It is Brophy's intention, not to dispute the judgments, but to correct the faulty, incomplete premises on which they were based and thus to create a new basis for Jeffers criticism. In this thorough, sensitive treatise, he has realized his intentions admirably.

**Brian McGinty** *is an attorney and free-lance writer. His article, "The View From Hawk's Tower: Poet Robinson Jeffers and the Rugged Coast that Shaped Him," appeared in the Nov. 1973 issue of* THE AMERICAN WEST.

**Broken Hand—The Life of Thomas Fitzpatrick: Mountain Man, Guide and Indian Agent** by LeRoy R. Hafen *(Old West, Denver, 1973; 359 pp., illus., map, appen., notes, index, $15.00).*

REVIEWED BY DONALD G. PIKE

THE FIGURE of Tom Fitzpatrick was but faintly etched in the pantheon of the American fur trade until LeRoy Hafen gave us a full-length biography in 1931. The original volume, a collaboration of Hafen and W. J. Ghent, had a scant run of six hundred copies. But Fitzpatrick was too important to remain the province of collectors, and Hafen has once again bent his hand to the task.

The new edition is far more than a reprint. Hafen has called on forty years of new research to make extensive revisions, a labor particularly evident in the first half of the book. As always with Hafen, the result is literate and thorough.

Broken Hand's biography is an essential addition to any library of the early West, for his career spanned the halcyon years of the fur trade and the establishment of a federal presence. Fitzpatrick entered the mountains a greenhorn with Ashley's second expedition up the Missouri, receiving a bloody baptism en route in the Arikara fight. By 1830 he headed the Rocky Mountain Fur Company with partners Milton Sublette, Henry Fraeb, Jean Baptiste Gervais, and Jim Bridger. His life was liberally peppered with the enraged grizzlies and hostile Indians that have become the requisite spice of fur trade history—and his escape from the Gros Ventres prior to the 1832 rendezvous has become a classic of the genre.

In the years after the trade destroyed itself, Fitzpatrick followed a pattern that is often alluded to, but seldom delineated with such clarity. He put his knowledge of geography to work as a nursemaid: leading the first overland emigrants (Bartleson-Bidwell) as far as Idaho; guiding and advising the government expeditions of Frémont, Kearny, and Abert; and serving as the first—and probably most able—agent the Plains Indians ever had.

**Donald G. Pike** *is author of* Anasazi: Ancient People of the Rock *and is currently working on a book on rendezvous country to be published by the American West Publishing Company in 1975.*

## BOOKS IN BRIEF

By Ed Holm

**The American Cowboy** by Harold McCracken *(Doubleday, Garden City, N.Y., 1973; 196 pp., illus., index, $15.00).*

A large-format popular history of cowboys and the world they created and inhabited, generously illustrated with color and black-and-white illustrations of works by Frederic Remington, Charles M. Russell, W. H. D. Koerner, Edward Borein, and other leading western artists.

**The Pictorial History of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police** by S. W. Horrall *(McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, Toronto, 1973; 256 pp., illus., index, $15.00).*

A colorful illustrated review of the Mounties by their official historian, on the occasion of the RCMP's one-hundredth anniversary.

**To A Cabin** by Dorothea Lange and Margaretta K. Mitchell *(Grossman, New York, 1973; 127 pp., illus., $15.00).*

The combined work of two gifted women, this sensitive picture book explores the world their respective children and grandchildren knew at a summer cabin on the California coast—and in doing so reminds us that the most precious and enduring joys are often the simplest ones. Beautifully designed and carefully printed, the book is a worthy posthumous tribute to the thoughts and images of Dorothea Lange, long recognized as one of America's most influential photographers.

**Miwok Means People** by Eugene L. Conrotto *(Valley Publishers, Fresno, Calif., 1973; 131 pp., illus., vocabulary, biblio., index, $5.95).*

This account provides insights into the history and culture of one of pioneer America's least understood and most abused Indian groups, the Miwoks (called "Diggers" by the gold miners) of central California.

**The Image of the Indian and the Black Man in American Art, 1590–1900** by Ellwood Parry *(George Braziller, New York, 1974; 192 pp., illus., notes, biblio., index, $12.50).*

A fascinating survey of white America's changing attitudes and prejudices toward racial minorities, as reflected in its art over a period of three hundred years.

**Dictionary of Prehistoric Indian Artifacts of the American Southwest** by Franklin Barnett *(Northland Press, Flagstaff, 1973; 130 pp., illus., glossary, $7.95, paper).*

Amateur and student archaeologists will value this carefully researched guide to southwestern Indian artifacts, both for its usefulness in identifying objects and for its simple explanations of how and why they were used. Data on each of more than 250 categories of artifacts includes a photograph showing representative items and a brief descriptive text using layman's terms.

**Vanishing Wildlife of North America** by Thomas B. Allen *(National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C., 1974; 208 pp., illus., index, $4.75).*

This comprehensive and interesting all-color volume explores the complex problems our society faces in saving an ever-growing number of endangered wildlife species and subspecies (109 at last count) from extinction. Illustrations are at the usual high National Geographic standard and include seventeen specially commissioned paintings.

## LOVE AND TRAGEDY IN OLD MONTEREY

*(Continued from page 47)*

was going through the last ceremonies of the church, to know that she must die, so young, so beloved, so beautiful, to leave this world to her so gay and happy, with everything around her to make it so: her child, her husband, her parents, and friends without number, for no one ever approached her without loving her, or knew her heavenly disposition without adoring her, to separate from all forever to go no one knows where. She was unable to speak, but her eyes when they rested on me told me her feelings too deeply.

Through the whole day she suffered tortures, apparently unconscious of all around her. Every room in the house was filled by her friends who by their tears showed me how great a loss I was about to suffer. Towards evening she for the first time in the day recognized me, called me by name, put out her little hands to embrace me, but with a gentle smile of resignation sunk back on her bed.

All honor was paid her by the inhabitants. I did not attend the funeral but there was hardly a person in the town that did not. Thus by the ignorance of the doctor I have been robbed of a treasure that can never be replaced.

My Negro boy Sam, who has been with me some three years, was so much attached to Manuela that between sadness and drink became crazy. In this state of mind he believed that in the world to come we would all be united once more together. He came into my room one morning, the 8th of April, crying and talking to me about it, and with the intention (as I have since found very good reason to believe) of sending me to join my wife. As I was very busy I ordered him to his room, the door of which opens into mine. He left my room, locked his door, and a few minutes after I heard the report of a pistol. I broke open the door and found him stretched on the floor which with the walls were covered with blood and brains. He had done his work coolly and effectively. Poor boy. He was a faithful servant. He had a black skin but a white heart. Knowing that his affection for my wife was the cause it cast a greater gloom on my spirits.

But I tried to cheer up, thinking that I had another duty to attend to the boy that Manuela had left me. Doña Angustias took charge of it. At first her milk did not agree with it, but with great

care and attention it soon recovered. It was beginning to take notice of me and I to center all the love and affection I had for the Mother in him. But this consolation was not to be enjoyed by me. On the night of the 14th it was accidentally killed by its grandmother. She was nursing it in bed, fell asleep. When she woke up he was dead. She had strangled it in her sleep. The doctor persuaded her it died of a convulsion, but to me alone he told the true story.

And now I am once more alone in the world. I know how necessary it is to call on philosophy to bear with all the troubles of the world, but what philosophy can console me? Had these deaths happened in the usual course of world events it would have been bad enough, but to have them caused by ignorance and violence, it is more than I can stand with Christian Fortitude. A few weeks ago we were all so happy, so contented. What a change; would you believe it, even her pet saddle horse has been stolen away. It appears like a judgment from God for some crime that I or her family have committed. But it is impossible for us to judge the actions of God. We must take the world as it comes. There is no remedy. I shall leave this place as soon as I can. I will give up my rancho and mill, for I have no intention now of leaving the army. I shall before I leave erect a tomb to mark the grave of my wife and child. The slab with this inscription I expect soon from San Francisco:

**To Doña Manuela Jimeno**

**her husband, Don Alfredo Sully, Lieutenant of the U.S. Army, dedicates this stone as a lasting tribute and final remembrance of his love and affection. She died March 28, 1851, at the age of seventeen years and five months.**

**To her son,**

**Don Thomas Manuel Sully, who himself died, the 15th of April, 1851, at the age of one month.**

This I expect soon. As soon as it arrives and is placed I shall bid adieu to Monterey, the happiest and saddest place I have ever lived in, never to return if I can help it.

With the death of his wife and infant son, something died in Alfred Sully. He lost the idealism and romanticism of his youth. Rather than let the unhappiness of California prey on his mind, he decided to bury himself in his military career and became a tough, unemotional, duty-bound soldier.

**Langdon Sully,** *grandson of the subject of the foregoing account, is a free-lance writer and college instructor at Oceanside, California. His articles have appeared in more than 250 publications, ranging from* Bluebook *and* Argosy *to* American Heritage.

## THE FLAPPERS WERE HER DAUGHTERS

*(Continued from page 10)*

the romping celebrities were highly irreverent and some of these celebrities, including two popular novelists, were easily recognized. She baited the trap with her liveliest style and most polished wit.

And her quarry rose with zest. The book was universally praised. "There is the dignity of birth and breeding in every line," declared one New York reviewer, presenting a dramatic contrast to previous charges of obscenity. "The first novel of a brilliant and witty woman from whom we shall expect great things," said another. But most critics believed it the work of an established writer and speculated who the brilliant, witty, talented author might be. Could it be, one critic wondered, Oscar Wilde? Meanwhile, the book was snapped up like the season's first violets in the flower stalls. At the height of the furor Gertrude stepped forward and blandly confessed.

ANY DOUBTS that Gertrude Atherton had arrived on the American literary scene were dispelled by *The Conqueror,* her 1902 biography of Alexander Hamilton. This she wrote in memory of her late grandfather, whose favorite historical figure Hamilton had been. She did a masterful research job, gathering new material from Hamilton descendants, even traveling to the West Indies to research his youth. In writing it, she invented a new literary form—ever since a staple on the book market—the fictionalized biography that incorporates the narrative techniques of the novel. She made another departure with this book: for the first (and only) time she gave center stage to a man. But as in all her books, sex came in for detailed attention; Gertrude documented Hamilton's illegitimate birth and delved into his extramarital affairs with a succession of prominent New York women. The book's reviews were mixed, but its sales were sensational: it sold well over a million copies.

Her friends thought that with success secure in her pocket Gertrude might finally settle down to a home and husband. Now in her mid-forties but looking years younger, she remained vividly attractive. When she wasn't writing, there was always some handsome man in attendance, while others coveted his privilege. It was an arrangement she did nothing to discourage with her flirtatious air, her heavy makeup, and her seductive wardrobe (she especially liked to show off her alabaster shoulders). Of all men she found Englishmen the most appealing, confessing that after their company she found it hard "to readapt to American men," who she said "lacked the subtlety, the suave polish . . . of the men one meets in London Society."

And she moved amidst the most fashionable and intellectual of them, frequenting the same drawing rooms as George Bernard Shaw (then a brilliant theater critic), Aubrey Beardsley, Henry James, Richard Le Gallienne, and the young Winston Churchill. For lovers she tended to prefer nonliterary figures, and it was said she acquired a new one with each book; they served as a stimulus to creativity, and when the book was done, she discarded them, often quite precipitously.

Only rarely did she permit emotion to sway her. After she settled in England, one New York beau persistently courted her by mail, pleading for her to return and marry him. She found herself romantically crossing the ocean, anticipating his kisses—only to discover at their reunion that he "didn't interest me in the least." She quickly exited on the pretext of being needed in California.

Once, while on a visit to San Francisco, she inspired a throbbing infatuation in a married man and discovered she reciprocated his ardor. There were clandestine meetings and long agonizings over what was to be done about their implacable love. One day she packed her suitcase and hied to a resort hotel on the ocean near Fort Ross. She had thought to nurse her broken heart, but unlike her heroine Weir in *What Dreams May Come,* she didn't feel the least suicidal. Indeed, she realized she was hugely enjoying her own melodrama. She later recalled: "I had never felt tragic before and might never have the opportunity again. I could enjoy it even more off in the wilderness by myself and spilling it into a book." Gertrude secluded herself in the hotel, and while the wintry wind howled mournfully about the eaves, she wrote *The Doomswoman,* a romantic novel of Spanish California.

And there was her brief romance with Ambrose Bierce. It began when she wrote the popular California author complimenting his writings. Their correspondence grew more intimate, and during one of her trips west they arranged a tryst in a small California town. But the handsome pair had scarcely met when they broke into a stormy session precipitated by their criticisms of each other's work. As the visit ended and he was walking her to an evening train, Bierce apologized and suddenly grew amorous, without noting the inappropriate spot he had chosen to clasp her in his arms. As she gleefully related it, "I threw back my head—well out of his reach—and laughed gayly. 'The great Bierce!' I cried. 'Master of style! The god on Olympus at whose feet pilgrims come to worship—trying to kiss a woman by a pigsty!' The train steamed in at the moment. He rushed me to it and almost flung me on board."

But her New York triumphs inclined Gertrude toward neither hearth nor husband. Instead, her orbit widened. Now that she might safely leave her New York and London interests in care of agents, she was free to indulge her travel whims. They carried her, trailing trunks of gowns and crates of books, to Denmark, to Germany, to France, to Belgium, to Hungary, to Switzerland, to Italy. She established a practice of writing each book in a different country; after completing research and assembling source materials, she boarded a train or an ocean liner for some place she had been wanting to see and there set up her studio.

On alternate years she made a trip back to San Francisco, and during these California visits she nearly always collected material for another book. In this way she turned out a series of volumes that gradually wove themselves into a panorama, depicting all periods of the state's history from Spanish days to the twentieth century. These included *Rezanov, The Splendid Idle Forties, The Doomswoman, A Daughter of the Vine* (a rewrite of *The Randolphs of Redwoods*), *The Californians, Transplanted, California: An Intimate History, The Horn of Life,* and *The House of Lee.* Once she returned East by way of Montana and took notes for the mining-town novel *Perch of the Devil.* Chancing to be home at the time of the 1906 earthquake, she made use of it as a background in two novels, *Ancestors* and *Sisters-in-law.*

On these visits to San Francisco she invariably created a stir with her stunning Paris wardrobe and sparkling continental gossip. Her most frequent San Francisco escort was the rich, social bachelor James D. Phelan, who alternated as San Francisco mayor and United States senator. At a luncheon for Senator Phelan at the St. Francis Hotel, she caused a minor sensation by lighting a cigarette in an atmosphere hitherto polluted only by men.

She sampled the offerings of Europe's culture capitals with a hummingbird's restlessness but with a honeybee's industry. She was now turning out at least one book a year. At length, she found one European city sufficiently to her taste to make it her headquarters for several years. This was Munich, which appealed to her severally for its art and intellectual ferment, its stately beauty, its bracing air, and its proximity to her other favored zones of stimulation. The inveterate aristocrat in her was drawn to its proud, highly-stratified society. Soon, as in London, she was frequenting the best drawing rooms, and for a time was an ornament in regal circles. But when the Prince of Bavaria offered her, through his equerry, a dubious station in his court, she not only irreverently declined, but mirthfully recounted the overture about town. She was unceremoniously dropped from the Court Circular.

At last she quelled speculation by stating unequivocally in a press interview that she had no intention of marrying again. "I prize liberty and freedom too much," she asserted, "to sacrifice either to any man." In later life she commented on her decision not to remarry. "I was never tempted much . . . once or twice a little bit, but not much." She amplified, "I doubt if I have ever been really in love." She confided to intimates that she was truly happy only when writing. Upon completing a book, if a new idea did not present itself promptly, she grew panicky, almost to the point of desperation. Once when suffering a mental block, she traveled to a French religious shrine to pray for inspiration. When her French landlady asked if she had come to pray for a husband, Gertrude scoffed, "A husband! What is a husband compared to a book?"

Even her interest in male companionship diminished over the years. She said she had discovered she wrote better without "that particular form of stimulation." The fact was that she felt superior to any man with whom she had come in close contact, with the possible exception of Alexander Hamilton, whom she came to idolize while researching his biography. Perhaps she regretted that their centuries did not coincide. She lamented to intimates that no matter how attractive a man might seem initially, he always turned out to harbor "some childish absurdity." Short on maternal feeling, she had no patience whatever with childish absurdities.

THAT GERTRUDE ATHERTON had come to view womankind as being generally superior to men was apparent in her writings. Her favorite theme as a mature writer was the greatness of women. Of course, none of her early heroines had been clinging vines; most had been astonishingly resilient women who coolly endured all manner of sudden catastrophe, from doomed fiances to depleted coffers. But with the years her female protagonists progressed in character to paragons of nobility, brilliance, and accomplishment. Around these dazzling suns, wan male satellites revolved in their uncertain orbits, most crippled by some fatal flaw.

Although their native habitats range over two continents and the periods of their lives span from before Christ to the mid-twentieth century, all of these remarkable women resemble the author in their independence, industry, and honesty; each to one degree or another was an extension of Gertrude Atherton's personality. She seems to have posed to herself the questions: What if I were culturally deprived, or sexually frigid, or growing old, or saddled with an alcoholic lover, or accused of murder? What would I do about it? She answered through the actions of her calm beauties (all were beauties except Hermia, and she gained beauty through surgery).

Endowed with indomitable spirits, these women could surmount any obstacle, weather any storm. In *Horn of Life*, when a socialite businessman loses the family fortune, it is his level-headed daughter Lynn who puts things together again. The San Francisco matron of *Sleeping Fires* rescues a handsome journalist from the alcoholic hell into which he has immersed himself. In *Perch of the Devil*, Ida Compton, a gum-chewing Montana hoyden, develops refinement and wins back her husband from a cultured siren. Elegant Melton Abbey in *The Sophisticates* triumphs over a false accusation of murder and delivers her town from both cultural stagnation and financial debacle. The well-bred women of *The House of Lee* roll up their sleeves and save the family estate from the clutches of the depression. Atherton heroines are quick to recognize scientific discoveries and are not afraid to tap them. In *Black Oxen* the fascinating Countess Zattiany attains an astonishing rejuvenation via the then fashionable Steinach treatment of hormone stimulation (which therapy the author herself underwent in the course of researching the book). And in the Freudian novel *The Crystal Cup* Gita obtains medical correction of her frigidity, which had caused her to inflict upon an admirer "an abraided shin, a scratch across his cheek, and a loosened front tooth which sent him cursing out of her presence."

Collective accomplishments by groups of women also inspired Atherton books. In *The White Morning* she depicted the sacrificing women of the nineteenth-century German revolution; and in *The Living Present* her subject was the French women who braved World War I trenches to minister to the wounded. The English suffragette movement was celebrated in *Julia France and Her Times*, whose heroine surmounted the burden of a lunatic husband and attained fame as a militant leader.

Her series of novels set in ancient times were demonstrations that women have always possessed the potential for greatness. She mined fifth-century Greek history in *The Jealous Gods* to show Tig to be every bit the equal of her husband Alchibiades; and in *The Immortal Marriage* she depicts Aspasia not only as the brilliant partner of Pericles but elevates her from the position of courtesan, to which history has assigned her, to that of morganatic wife. The surpassing excellencies of her fictional Roman heroine Pomponia in *The Golden Peacock* moved the *New York Times* reviewer to complain: "The extra-ordinarily beautiful, extra-ordinarily intelligent, extra-ordinarily strong-willed and completely self-satisfied Pomponia is too domineering, too much the superwoman . . ."

But the author's legions of women readers did not think Pomponia too much the superwoman. For them Pomponia held credibility; they could readily identify with her, having graduated up to Pomponia via a long procession of assertive Atherton heroines. Each had spurned relegation to a supporting role, claiming the right to think and act for herself, to participate, if she wished, in business, politics, and intellectual affairs. In short, each refused to recognize the traditional dominion of the male. Mrs. Atherton's early heroines may have been, as critics charged, atypically aggressive and emancipated; but they became less and less atypical as her books and readers multiplied.

And they did phenomenally. Since her first book tottered uncertainly off the press in 1888, she had been turning out titles nonstop at the rate of at least one a year. Many of them were runaway best-sellers. Besides her books she ground out a steady stream of articles and stories for newspapers and magazines, and most of these, too, waved the banner of sexual equality. The impact of her feminist message was not approached by any other fiction writer, and Gertrude Atherton was the most read woman writer of her time. Later on, the critics would differ on her position as a novelist (their verdicts ranging from "mediocre" to "first-rate"), but they would agree in according her a major role in influencing women.

How did the author confer plausibility upon her audacious superwomen, then nearly as remote from everyday reality as science-fiction heroines are today? How did she persuade submerged housewives, hemmed-in spinsters, and thwarted professional women to believe in her Hermias and Gitas to the extent of emulating them and breaking their own bonds? The power and intensity of her writing was one motivator. Her readers' doubts bounced against her grand authority and were absorbed by it. Every woman might fulfill herself, she bountifully promised; every woman can!

Another reason women trustingly fell in step behind Atherton heroines was their seeming contemporaneity. Gertrude Atherton was a veritable antenna for detecting up-to-the-minute topicality—fashions, fads, ideas, phobias, current problems. Not only could she divine what was the very latest, but very often she anticipated it. An Atherton heroine wore the very latest cloche hat, danced the latest steps, sipped the latest cocktail, and spoke the latest swear words and Freudian

lingo. So it followed that if the girl in the cloche hat decided to drive an ambulance at the war front, or to go into business, or to propose to the man of her choice (the one who gave her her head), or not to bear children, then she must be acting contemporarily. Even Pomponia had her imitators, for despite her buskins and drapery she was essentially a flapper.

But no less a beacon was the author herself—a shining example of a woman who was her *own* woman. She was legendary both for her hard-fought battle for literary recognition and for her prodigious output. Even in 1917 a literary critic, marveling at how she had weathered controversy and at her undiminished productivity, called her "one of the indestructible comets." Yet, her career was not yet at its midway point; more than thirty full years remained ahead. Her whirlpool of energy spilled over into public affairs. During World War I she did relief work on the battlefront for which she received the decoration of the French Legion d'Honneur. She plunged exuberantly into American political campaigns, making scores of impassioned speeches on behalf of presidential candidates Woodrow Wilson and Al Smith. She worked tirelessly for women's suffrage, serving as a California officer of the movement. She was a public figure on two continents. The literary critic Henry James Forman wrote following her death: "I still recall the searching scrutiny with which every woman looked at her in any house or gathering she entered. She was the talk of the nation's women."

Gertrude Atherton's perennial youth was likewise the focus of wonder. In later years she looked fully two decades younger than she was, and with time's passage her friends could detect no slackening of her pace. At seventy-seven, she underwent a second series of glandular treatments, but since that therapy is now generally discredited, she probably benefitted only psychologically. The only perceptible alteration in her life-style was a diminution of travel and a gradual settling down in San Francisco.

There she shared with her widowed daughter Muriel and a bachelor grandson a handsome mansion in the fashionable Pacific Heights district. In an imposing drawing room she reopened her literary salon, interrupted more than a half century before, with a new membership, predominantly the city's younger literati, whom she had come to prefer to her own age group. She presided over it with elegance, wit, and consummate assurance. With the outbreak of World War II, she and several other writers operated a club for sailors. Literary figures visiting San Francisco called on her to pay their respects, and the national press, all controversy long forgotten, habitually referred to her, to her disgust, as "the dowager of American letters."

Of course, it never crossed her mind to retire. The books of Gertrude's final years returned to her theme of depicting California through its various historic periods. She kept in the thick of contemporary life with her plain-spoken articles and letters-to-the-editor. When in her mid-eighties, she eagerly accepted an assignment from a San Francisco newspaper to write a series of articles on lower-level night life. She breezed through the portals of emporiums of doubtful character, interviewing bartenders, bargirls, bouncers, and frowsy habitues, whom she chronicled in colorful detail. San Francisco followed these activities with an avidity that recalled the sensation of *The Randolphs of Redwoods*.

On her ninetieth birthday, immaculately coiffed, brightly rouged on cheeks and lips, and wearing a stunning new gown of blue velvet, Gertrude Atherton presided with sharp-eyed gaiety at an afternoon reception in her honor. San Francisco's mayor Roger Lapham was there to present her a gold medal. After accepting with pleasure, she flirtatiously requested an "official kiss" from her old friend and received two, on cheek and forehead. She had recently completed her fifty-sixth book, *My San Francisco: A Wayward Biography*, a witty, highly personal description of contemporary San Francisco. Already she had begun another historical novel set against a background of California quicksilver mining. But her fifty-seventh book was not quite completed when, seven months later, on June 14, 1948, she died in a Palo Alto hospital from the effects of a paralytic stroke.

Woman's lot concerned her until the end. Her last publication was a letter to the editor of the *San Francisco News* nominating Eleanor Roosevelt for president. "It is high time a woman was President of the United States," she insisted. However, an obsessive worry of her last years was not that women would lose their fight for equal rights, but that they would muff it. Although she saw women as still being "far from the center" of power, she was convinced they were striding to victory (this was before the onset of feminist apathy in the 1950s). Indeed, she believed they had already reached "the outermost suburbs of sex equality," and she was proud of her part in getting them there. But she worried that women, smoldering after centuries of abuse, would not stop short of revengeful domination over men—thereby sowing the seeds of reaction and a return to inequality. In her writings and public statements she insisted that human happiness required freedom for both men and women.

Gertrude Atherton early knew the pain of sexist repression, knew the cost of strength required to overcome it, knew its scars—the scars that made her wary of emotional commitment and, despite her splendid professional triumphs and her surpassing benefit to women, largely relegated her to the role of an observer in human relations. She knew the full cost of the destructive battle of the sexes and urged that it end at last with true sexual equality.

"The time will come when the efforts of the most energetic and determined will be realized," she predicted; "and it will be for them to hold the scales even—permanently even—to achieve a happiness that has eluded both men and women since the world began."

**Elinor Richey** *is a Berkeley, California, writer with wide-ranging interests. Her recent books* The Ultimate Victorians *and* Remain to be Seen *deal with historic California homes and architecture; the above article on Gertrude Atherton is the result of research for a forthcoming book on famous American women.*

Membership in the Western History Association is open to anyone interested in the history and culture of the American West. Inquiries should be addressed to the Secretary, William D. Rowley, Department of History, University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada 89507. Annual dues are $12.50 (including THE AMERICAN WEST, the WESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY and other association publications). Sustaining Member $25.00 annually. Sponsoring Member $100 or more annually. Life Member $250 paid in a twelve-month period. Individuals or institutions not wishing to become members may subscribe to either THE AMERICAN WEST or the WESTERN HISTORICAL QUARTERLY at regular subscription rates.


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## *Forthcoming in*

## THE AMERICAN WEST

While dates in prehistory usually appear in textbooks as dull statistics, the stories behind their establishment often are exciting sagas. In **Amateurs, Mavericks, and the Discovery of Early Man in America,** Franklin Folsom tells how the curiosity of a group of amateur naturalists led to the discovery of arrowheads embedded in fossil bison bones near Folsom, New Mexico. After a hard battle for scientific acceptance, this find pushed the known presence of Indians in the New World back seven thousand years farther than previously known.

Approbation also was a long time coming for dendrochronology, the science of dating events by the growth rings in wood. The transformation of **A. E. Douglass** from astronomer into Southwest explorer and interpreter of "talking trees" is related by Daphne Overstreet.

The reflections of other ramblers are discussed by Phillip Drennon Thomas in **Traveling West with Robert Louis Stevenson** and by Ted C. Hinckley in **Stirrups or Pedals: Was Frederic Remington Seer or Humorist?** And in **Across the North Pole to America,** Martin Cole narrates the little-known landmark flight of three Russian fliers to California in 1937.

*With the exception of a landslide washed away by rushing waters, the passage of ninety years seems to have dislodged hardly a stone in Colorado's Rio Las Animas Canyon, as a comparison of this recent view with that on pages 12–13 will disclose. During the summer months a Denver & Rio Grande excursion train still makes the forty-four mile run between Silverton and Durango over narrow-gauge tracks first laid down in 1882.*